

THE TIMES

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'Royal college' plan to boost teachers

20p basic tax rate is set as Tory target

By PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR

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JOHN MAJOR will today promise to aim for a 20p basic rate of income tax within the next five years as part of a "formula for prosperity" to keep Britain booming.

It will be the first time that the Prime Minister has said when he hopes to achieve that goal, and he intends to contrast it to Labour's allegedly vague commitment to an eventual bottom rate of 10p.

Mr Major will also put the expansion of educational choice at the heart of his appeal to the country, promising to improve standards through a new "royal college" of teachers. That would be comparable to the Royal College of Nursing and have a similar remit of improving standards, discouraging militancy and enhancing the prestige of teaching as a profession.

The ideas will be outlined in the Conservatives' 22,000-word manifesto, which Mr Major will describe as the boldest and most far-reaching produced by any party for two decades. Other proposed measures include plans to force councils to sell homes that have been empty for more than a year, the privatisation of the London Underground, and the granting of greater commercial freedom to the Post Office. Mr Major will also promise to keep public spending below 40 per cent of the national income, to aim to eliminate public borrowing by the year 2000, and to ensure that Britain retains the lowest tax burden in Europe.

According to Tory sources

allegations surrounding the former minister Neil Hamilton. Yesterday he used his morning press conference to take all the questions the press could throw at him on the subject, defending Mr Hamilton's right to remain a candidate while he declared his innocence of the charges against him.

He also condemned the "witch-hunt mentality" being adopted, and attacked Tony Blair for suggesting that he would have sacked Mr Hamilton had he been a Labour MP.

But any hopes that the issue might die were dashed when the Liberal Democrats announced that they would join Labour in seeking a suitable anti-corruption candidate to stand against Mr Hamilton in Tavistock. Names being floated in Westminster last night were Frances Lawrence, widow of the murdered London headmaster, and Judge Stephen Tumim. Mrs Lawrence made plain, however, that she was unwilling to be considered.

Mr Major will launch the manifesto encouraged by an opinion poll showing that Labour's lead has narrowed by four points, although he remains dogged by the sleaze

strong theme will be the extension of personal choice and security and the tax pledge, in particular, will please the Right. John Redwood said last night: "I want to see us aiming for a 20p rate in five years. We can do it and we should do it."

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On the first day of the campaign proper, Paddy Ashdown sought to ridicule both Labour and the Tories by putting on a Punch and Judy show featuring Mr Blair as Punch and Mr Major as Judy. His serious message was a call for a return to real issues.

Last night's ICM poll in *The Guardian* gave Mr Major his first ray of hope for some time.

Taken over the Easter weekend, it put Labour on 46 per cent, down two points, the Conservatives on 32 per cent, up two, and the Liberal Democrats on 17 per cent, up one.

Proceeds going to a proposed National Endowment for Science and the Arts, which would also be partly funded by the Lottery. "The arts, culture and sport are central to the task of recreating the sense of community, identity and civic pride that should define our country," the manifesto says. "Yet we consistently undervalue the role of the arts and culture in helping to create a civic society from amateur theatre to our art galleries."

Although financial incentives will not be detailed in the manifesto, a party source said that tax incentives were under active consideration. The manifesto argues that thousands of people are employed in the arts and culture, and many are significant earners for Britain, bringing in millions of tourists.

The manifesto also makes clear that, under a separate initiative, Labour would take a lead in promoting opportunities for sportsmen. "School sports must be the foundation. We will bring the Government's policy of forcing schools to sell off playing fields to an end," the document says.

It also pledges full backing for England's bid to host the 2006 World Cup, saying that a Labour government would "work to bring the Olympics and other major international sporting events to Britain".

A Labour spokesman said: "Labour is about prudence and responsibility, but that does not mean that it cannot have fun."

The manifesto also says that Labour would review the distribution of lottery funds to ensure that the maximum

number of people would benefit. It confirms that a Labour government would set up a new millennium commission that would support a range of education, environment and public health projects.

□ Tony Blair yesterday gave his clearest indication yet that a Labour government would not sign up to a single European currency if that would threaten Britain's interests (James Landale writes).

In a firm attempt to counter Tory claims that Labour is soft on Europe, the Labour leader emphasised his party's manifesto commitment to holding a referendum on a single currency. He also insisted that a Labour government would argue strongly against a single currency if the Maastricht criteria for membership were fudged.

Labour wants stars to aid new talent

By JILL SHERMAN
CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

POP GROUPS, leading actors and film stars will be given incentives to donate some of their royalties to a fund to sponsor talented youngsters under a plan to be revealed in Labour's manifesto tomorrow.

Labour is considering giving tax incentives to successful performers to encourage them to help gifted children.

Pop stars such as Mick Hucknall of Simply Red and Annie Lennox would be encouraged to give part of their earnings to an endowment fund similar to the National Trust which would distribute the money to talented youngsters.

Special exhibitions and concerts could also be arranged with part of the

proceeds going to a proposed National Endowment for Science and the Arts, which would also be partly funded by the Lottery. "The arts, culture and sport are central to the task of recreating the sense of community, identity and civic pride that should define our country," the manifesto says. "Yet we consistently undervalue the role of the arts and culture in helping to create a civic society from amateur theatre to our art galleries."

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Spacecraft is at the final frontier

The American space agency Nasa has pulled the plug on the spacecraft *Pioneer 10*, which was launched in March 1972 to explore Jupiter.

The spacecraft is more than six billion miles away. Its signal is still being picked up but only one instrument is working and the cost is no longer justified. Page 6

Netanyahu puts blame on Egypt

The Israeli Prime Minister accused Egypt of fanning the flames of radicalism in the Middle East and of helping to push the peace process to its present crisis.

Benjamin Netanyahu was referring to recent violence and the Arab League's determination to isolate Israel. Page 15

Unfair sexism costs golf fair share of lottery cash

By ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

GOLF clubs are missing out on millions of pounds in lottery grants because they refuse to admit women members, according to an unpublis

hed Sports Council report. The council has given out £427 million in some 2,000 lottery grants since 1995, but only 21 – worth a total of £3 million – have gone to golf. A further 70 applications from golf clubs have been refused, making it the only major sport to have more projects rejected than supported.

Peter Grant, who wrote the Sports Council report, said: "The lottery is potentially the greatest opportunity for club-based sport... and, to date, golf is missing out."

The council will not give grants to clubs which discriminate against women. Newport Golf Club in South Wales, for example, has refused to admit women members, and many golf clubs restrict the

Thames craft are left high and dry

By NICK NUTTALL, ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

BOATS on the Thames are at increasing risk of running aground after two years of record-breaking drought and a month of exceptionally dry weather.

Yesterday the Port of London Authority issued navigation notices restricting sailings between Kew and Teddington and urging boat users to take care at low tides.

The low flows have led to the cancellation of boat trips up to Hampton Court over the past few days and more and more vessels have been grounding as the channels normally deep enough to take them dwindle away.

The news comes as the Institute of Hydrology, which monitors weather patterns, is to pronounce last month as having had half its expected rainfall. An official said yesterday that the figures were likely to show that the period from

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Prison ship wins go-ahead to take first inmates

By RICHARD FORD
HOME CORRESPONDENT

THE first inmates to be held on a prison ship since the Victorian age will board Her Majesty's Prison Weare at the end of the month after Labour endorsed planning approval for the vessel's onshore facilities.

Jack Straw backed the plan after being warned by the Prison Service that without emergency accommodation, there was a danger of a "loss of control" in jails in England and Wales.

He was also told by Ann Widdecombe, the Prisons Minister, that last Tuesday the service only avoided locking out prisoners in the North West "by the narrowest of margins". The service has been bussing inmates around the country in an increasingly desperate search to meet the

rise in prison numbers. Last week the jail population reached 59,710.

Mr Straw was briefed on the crisis because as the general election has been called, the Government needed Labour's approval for on-shore facilities to be erected near the mooring at Portland Harbour in Dorset.

Richard Tilt, Director-General of the Prison Service, was called in to talk to the Shadow Home Secretary on the scale of the crisis facing the Prison Service. He warned Mr Straw of the threat of a breakdown in control in prisons unless extra places were found. Although the number of inmates in the 135 jails in England and Wales traditionally falls over Easter, the jail population is expected to start rising by 350 a week by the middle of the month.

Miss Widdecombe sought Mr Straw's support for a

visitors' centre and storage facilities. The local council had protested that the prison ship would hit the tourist industry.

Technically, the council's efforts to resist the ship being moored at Portland were based largely on its objection to the construction of a five-metre high, razor-wire topped

fence on the harbour. The actual berthing of the ship fell outside planning legislation.

However, after a planning inquiry, John Gummer, the Environment Secretary, backed the proposal. In its ruling, the DoE said: "The Secretary of State is satisfied that one of the least prominent

locations has been chosen and that the development will not appear out of place in a commercial, working port.

The views of it from the main tourist areas and beaches, some two miles away, will be very limited."

In Miss Widdecombe's letter seeking Labour support,

said: "The need to have prison places is acute. The Prison Service is operating extremely close to its capacity limit."

She added that if the Prison Service was unable to place inmates on the Weare by the end of the month, the service would have to use police cells at a cost of £300 per prisoners

per night. Mr Straw wrote to Mrs Widdecombe supporting the planning approval. He said that given Mr Tilt's warnings and "in the interests of public safety and prudent financial management" the ship should be used on a temporary basis.

However, he condemned the Government for allowing a population crisis to develop in the prison system. It had resulted in a desperate search for emergency accommodation at disused military bases in Yorkshire and a former Pontins holiday camp in Lancashire.

He said: "The Tories have let a scandalous situation develop. They have allowed the prison population to reach a record level without planning proper accommodation. It is so bad that the head of the Prison Service has warned of a risk of a 'loss of control' and

ministers are talking of using police cells".

He said Labour would help the government "clear up the mess" but demanded that the Home Office conduct a full audit of prison places and the demands being put on the service.

Up to 500 low-risk prisoners are to be held for up to three years aboard the Weare which is moored in Portland harbour after being bought by the Prison Service from £3.5 million.

The Weare was formally known as The Resolution. It was moored in the Hudson River near New York after being used until 1994 by the New York City Department of Corrections to hold medium-security prisons. The Resolution provided dormitory accommodation on its five decks for soldiers after the Falklands conflict.

Shackled patient revives security dispute

A REMAND prisoner recovering from a lung transplant is shackled to a security guard in hospital (Richard Ford writes). The disclosure has reopened the row over the chaining of sick prisoners.

Wayne Brittle, 30, was taken from Doncaster private prison to North General Hospital in Sheffield after collapsing in the jail, where he was on remand facing robbery charges. He had a lung transplant last December and was remanded to Doncaster prison last

week accused of robbery involving £800. Mr Brittle, from Rotherham, south Yorkshire, has a handcuff on his left wrist, which is chained to a Group 4 security guard who sits at the end of the bed.

Last night Denis MacShane, Labour MP for Rotherham, called on the Home Secretary to intervene and order the remand prisoner to be unchained. He said: "The barbaric approach of Conservative ministers to sick people who have not been convicted of any crime is

unacceptable in the late twentieth century."

Mr Brittle is chained because of a risk assessment undertaken by Premier Prisons, the company running Doncaster jail. A spokesman for the jail said: "We did a risk assessment and the protection of the public is our top priority. We decided because of the seriousness of the charge, he should be under restraint."

A hospital spokesman said: "Our consultants at the moment do not feel that the restraint is impeding his care."

Disaster evidence not new, say police

By PAUL WILKINSON

CLAIMS of new evidence on the Hillsborough disaster were rejected yesterday by the police force that took much of the responsibility for the 1989 tragedy.

Ian Daines, the force's assistant chief constable, said that reports of a new video tape showing the crowd pens in the Sheffield Wednesday football stadium where 96 fans were fatally crushed only added "confusion to an already complex set of circumstances".

The support group set up by the families of the victims yesterday demanded a re-opening of the inquiry after viewing the video, said to have been shot by a surveillance camera monitoring the Leppings Lane end of the ground during the FA Cup semi-final.

South Yorkshire Police has always maintained that because of a malfunction its officers could not see that the pens were already full when they ordered gates to be opened.

The force told the inquiry by Lord Justice Taylor and the inquest that because of a malfunction the pictures were of a "very poor quality", but according to a report published yesterday the video shows that the camera provided a clear enough picture for individuals to be picked out.

The video tape has lain in the archives of Yorkshire Television since it was given to the company by the police for use as part of a documentary.

The CPS said yesterday: "We are looking at the material. We have promised a response within 14 days."



Near Richmond Bridge parts of the Thames have become shallow enough to allow walking where once there was a navigation channel

Boats left high and dry

stretches of the Thames, channels are now only about three feet deep.

"With rainfall being reported as well below average by the Meteorological Office for the past eight years and this January being the fourth driest on record, groundwater level are extremely low. This means less water will flow into the Thames and its tributaries," David Jeffery, the Port of London Authority chief executive, said.

John Collier, whose family run pleasure boats upstream from Westminster pier, said

that conditions on the river were undermining business. Yesterday Mr Collier, at the helm of the *Clifton Castle*, found it impossible to dock flush to Kew pier. Passengers had to leap ashore.

He blamed Thames Water for taking too much water for public supply and urged the Port of London Authority to start dredging in the upper reaches. But the authority said that dredging was not the answer to raising water levels: the water would simply run into the valleys created by the dredging.

Dr Brian Arkell, principal planner for water resources for the Environment Agency's Thames Region, said yesterday: "We are looking at a whole range of contingency plans should this worsen into the summer... everyone digging their garden over recent days will realise how dry it has been."

He said that the Environment Agency was looking at the possibility of cutting the amounts of fresh water the water companies are allowed to take. "But at the end of the day

there is a need to maintain public water supply for the people of London," Dr Arkell said.

Away from the river, it emerged yesterday that many point-to-point racing events had become a farce as owners and riders began to withdraw horses because the ground was too hard.

Carl Evans, a member of the Point To Point Owners' and Riders' Association and the Times correspondent for the sport, said that at the East Kent meeting in Aldington there had been only ten runners for six races. Many meetings nowadays, he added, saw "walkovers", with only one horse entered.

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The fast-track chief constable takes over

By STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

BEFORE joining the Metropolitan Police at the age of 20, Elizabeth Neville's experiences of the law were limited to being stopped for riding her bicycle without lights as an undergraduate at St Hilda's in Oxford, where she read philosophy and psychology.

Yesterday she took over the reins of the 1,180-strong Wiltshire force as Britain's second woman chief constable. Wiltshire is one of the largest force areas in England and covers Stonehenge, the Salisbury Plain and the industrial town of Swindon.

An inspector in her mid-twenties, Miss Neville, the daughter of a civil engineer and an educational psychologist, was recruited under a graduate fast-track scheme. She became a superintendent at 33 and beat 20 men to become assistant chief constable of Sussex five years later. In 1995 she became the most senior operational woman commander as deputy chief constable of Northamptonshire.

Miss Neville still bridges at the biographies and newspaper profiles that have fastened on the fact that she is a

divorced mother of two: she has a son Michael and a daughter Katherine by her marriage to another police officer. She likes to point out that no one ever talks about male officers in the same terms.

She says she has always had support from her male colleagues during her career and never experienced sexism in a highly male-dominated profession. Only once, 13 years ago after the birth of her first child, did anybody question her return to work.



Neville will head one of largest force areas

Top black officer in race claim

By RUSSELL JENKINS

THE most senior black police man in Britain's second largest force claimed yesterday that he was repeatedly passed over for promotion in favour of women and white officers because of his colour.

Chief Inspector Martin Harding, 39, from Rochdale, Greater Manchester, told an industrial tribunal hearing that he was denied advancement in Greater Manchester Police because he was a man and of "African origin". The officer, who is claiming racial and sexual discrimination, said he was accepted as a candidate for promotion to chief inspector in July 1992 and was told it could be 18 months before he was made up. However, he was not promoted until March 1996.

Mr Harding, a father of two, said: "Four other officers passed the board on the same day. All were white and one was a woman. Three gained substantive or temporary positions within six months."

Greater Manchester Police strongly deny the allegations and have said that they will fiercely contest the action.

Kidnap mother ill

Mavis Mangan, 61, who met John Major in Downing Street last month to discuss ways of winning freedom for her son Keith, kidnapped by rebels in Kashmir in 1995, has suffered a heart attack. She has cancelled a trip to India this month where she hoped to make a personal plea to the kidnappers. Mrs Mangan, from Middlesbrough, Teesside, was yesterday "quite comfortable" in South Cleveland Hospital, and may be allowed home in a few days.

Priest on theft charge

A Roman Catholic priest was yesterday charged with stealing more than £200,000 from church funds. Father Seamus Hefferton, 65, was released on conditional bail after appearing before Dartford magistrates on four theft charges. He originally faced one charge of allegedly stealing £17,350 from a Catholic Social Club in Swanley, Kent. He was later charged with three further offences of theft of funds from the Church of the Holy Apostles, Swanley.

Hotel on rails plan fails

Eurostar's £200 million plan to run luxury "hotels" on wheels between Britain's regional cities and Europe has been scrapped. More than 30 of the carriages, featuring bedrooms and reclining seats, have been delivered. But doubts about demand and the inability of the Eurostar engines to supply enough power for washing facilities and lavatories have indefinitely postponed the plan. If all the toilets were flushed at once the train would come to a halt.

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Moby may live on as a museum piece

By SHIRLEY ENGLISH

THE skeleton of Moby, the 50ft sperm whale that died on the mudflats of the Forth on Easter Monday, could become an exhibit in the National Museums of Scotland in Edinburgh.

Curators have been given permission to recover the bones of the 40-tonne mammal after an autopsy by a Department of Environment pathologist.

Yesterday the Receiver of Wrecks

accepted responsibility for disposing of the whale, which is Crown property, having beached below the high water mark. Moby's remains will be buried in a landfill site near Grangemouth, Falkirk Council has agreed to assist.

Dr Keith Todd, curator at North Queensferry's Deep Sea World, and Eric Crombie, the centre's diver, spent the night with Moby to ensure that people did not try to take his teeth for souvenirs.

Today, a tug will pull the dead

whale off the soft mudbank at high tide and be taken to a jetty at South Alloa, where attempts will be made to lift him by crane onto an articulated lorry. The whale will then be taken to the council landfill site.

The cost of Moby's disposal, estimated at around £3,000, will be met by the Receiver of Wrecks and there may be a donation from the National Museums if it manages to raise the £5,000 needed to remove the skeleton.

Princess accuses photographer of harassment

By STEPHEN FARRELL

DIANA, Princess of Wales, yesterday accused a paparazzi photographer of harassing her after she asked a passer-by to help and stood by as he removed the film.

The Princess issued a statement justifying her action in response to police criticism of her role in the incident outside an exclusive west London gym. Her rescuer was a Gaelic football player who makes a living as an hotel tour.

A tabloid newspaper yesterday published pictures of Kevin Duggan, 28, from West Belfast, forcing award-winning royal photographer Brendan Behrein against a wall and putting him in an armlock.

Police said there would be no action because Mr Behrein did not make a complaint. However senior officers were furious and said it demonstrated that the Princess needed her full-time police protection to be restored. "Apart from anything else an alleged assault took place and a theft," said one source.

The Princess responded by issuing a statement from her office saying she had found the photographer's actions distressing. "Once again the Princess of Wales has been harassed by a photographer. Once again this has become the subject of inaccurate press comment," the statement said.

The Princess hopes that the recently passed Protection from Harassment Act will give greater protection to people such as herself who are the victims of this kind of distressing intrusion into their private lives.

Mr Behrein, 39, said he took the pictures from 50ft away as the Princess left the gym on Monday morning, and was astonished when she ran across the road, demanded the

film and then summoned help.

"I am stunned she did not stop in and stop it. It was outrageous. She knows I am not a stalker or a threat. I have taken photographs of her for ten years," he said.

Kevin Bruce, the freelance photographer who witnessed the scene and sold his pictures for around £8,000, said: "He knew full well it was the Princess. She was standing there talking to a photographer. She's not easily mistaken."

Legal sources last night indicated that the Princess would be unlikely to win a prosecution in such circumstances under the Protection from Harassment Bill 1997, which received Royal Assent last month but which will not come into force until after the general election.

The legislation is intended to protect victims from stalkers and nuisance neighbours. It creates two new crimes, the most serious carrying a maximum five year jail sentence and unlimited fine.

However for an offence to be committed the behaviour must have occurred more than once and it allows the alleged offender to claim his course of conduct was reasonable in the particular circumstances.

In August last year the Princess won a High Court injunction against the freelance photographer Martin Stenning, 36, banning him from going within 300 yards of her. She complained that Stenning made her life a misery by following her everywhere on his Suzuki motorcycle and resorted to taking his helmet and keys.

Brendan Behrein was the 1995 Nikon Royal Photographer of the Year. He had not

seen the Princess since the



The Princess looks on as Brendan Behrein is held in an armlock by Kevin Duggan

Archers villain prompts farmyard slip by Ford

By BILL FROST

MANY Radio 4 listeners rang the BBC yesterday to complain at Anna Ford's use of a vulgar term of abuse during the *Today* programme.

The presenter, who later apologised for the slip, described Simon Pemberton, heartless and grasping villain of Radio 4's *The Archers*, as "rather a shit" for trying to evict his tenants, the Grundys, from their farm. Although several fans of the radio serial telephoned to support Ms Ford's blunt verdict on the so-called *Borchester Bounder*, about 40 callers expressed anger at her gaffe.

The BBC switchboard got its first call shortly after 8.25am when Ms Ford was discussing Pemberton's attempt to banish the Grundys from their home with spokesmen from the Country Landowners' Association and the Tenant Farmers' Association.

The *Borchester Bounder* "does seem rather a shit, he's a bit ruthless, shouldn't he be courted?", she suggested.

Ms Ford, 53, came out of the studio at the end of the programme to face a "mild dressing down" from production staff for "letting her heart rule her head", according to one insider.

The broadcaster, who probably spoke for a legion of Radio 4 listeners who back the beleaguered Grundys against their cruel landlord, said: "I realise it was an unfortunate slip of the tongue."

A BBC spokesman said: "We had a number of complaints. I think a lot came from non-metropolitan listeners who are not used to hearing this sort of language. It is the sort of thing that can happen on live radio." Jon Barton, Editor of *Today*, also expressed regret: "This is a long,

Leading article, page 21

Bolting racehorse knocks baby out of his pram

By TIM JONES

A BABY escaped unharmed yesterday after a runaway racehorse kicked over his pram as it bolted through a crowd of spectators.

Lee Marshall, aged two months, was knocked to the ground when the animal bucked and hit the side of his pushchair with its hooves as it ran wild through the spectators' enclosure at Southwell, Nottinghamshire.

Thousands of television viewers saw the incident as the horse, Formidable Flame, unseated its jockey, burst out of the starting stalls, and smashed through the rails into the crowd.

The child was being looked after by his grandmother, Maureen Marshall, when the horse bolted just before it was due to run in the 3 o'clock race. Mrs Marshall said: "It was terrifying. People were

screaming and scattering as the loose horse came towards me. It was bucking and lashing out and it swept past and bowled my and the baby in the pushchair over."

Paul Marshall, Lee's father, said: "It knocked me over and gave me a bang on the leg but I was not hurt. Then I saw the

"I saw its hoof go straight into the pram but then I was knocked over and for a moment I lost sight of the baby. But then I picked him up and his face was a bit red from where he had landed on it but apart from that he was perfectly OK."

Lee was taken to hospital for checks, but was released soon afterwards.

Racing, page 15



Lee Marshall in safe hands after the incident

Father finds his daughter dead in road crash

By LIN JENKINS

A POLICE inspector wept openly yesterday as he told of going to the scene of a fatal car crash near his home and finding that his daughter had been killed.

Chief Inspector Tim Yeoman said he went out in the car with his other daughter to look for Charis when she and her boyfriend were late for a family meal at Easter.

They came across people leaning over a footbridge to look at an accident. "Like all fathers I hoped it was not my child, that they were one of the ones in the queue. But it wasn't, it was my daughter."

Miss Yeoman, a 20-year-old student nurse, was on her way to her parents' home in Tiverton, Devon, when her car was hit by another which careered into her path from the other side of a dual-carriageway. Her boyfriend, Jason Jago, broke his arm in the crash and suffered lacerations.

Stephen Pengelly, from Tiverton, the driver of the other car, was described as being in a serious condition with multiple injuries in the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital yesterday, where he was flown by air ambulance.

Mr Yeoman, who works at Devon and Cornwall Police headquarters near Exeter, said he could not express the depth of his grief. "She was a lovely daughter. Now my other daughter, Nicola, has no sister. Her boyfriend has no girlfriend."

She and Mr Jago, a university student, were planning to marry next year after she had qualified. "They were made for each other. This is an absolute and total tragedy," Mr Yeoman said. Nicola Yeoman is a nurse at the Bristol Royal Hospital for Sick Children.

Of the crash, he said: "I just want it to be known that if crash barriers had been erected along that dual-carriageway this tragedy may never have happened."

He said there had been two fatal accidents on the road in two years. "One fatal is one too many. I really do feel that this is now three too many."

Assistant Chief Constable John Albon said traffic had been heavy over the holiday.

"It is every father's worst nightmare to drive out and look for his daughter and to come across that carnage."

He said that had the accident been further along the road, she would have survived as there were crash barriers there.

Police are appealing for witnesses to the crash, which happened at 6pm on Monday evening, halfway between the A361 junction with the M5 and the Bolham junction.



Charis Yeoman: she was planning to marry



Tim Yeoman: he called for crash barriers

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Teaching unions back refusal to take unruly pupils

By JOHN O'LEARY AND DAVID CHARTER

TEACHERS launched a concerted attempt yesterday to stem the growing level of violence in schools as the two biggest classroom unions threatened not to teach the most disruptive pupils.

For the first time, delegates at the National Union of Teachers' annual conference voted to support members refusing to teach pupils who present an "unacceptable safety risk". The move put the union in line with the rival National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers, which yesterday said that schools could easily expel 100,000 children a year, eight times the current figure, if they were strict about dealing with serious disruption.

However, the two unions adopt different solutions. The NASUWT blames the integration of disruptive pupils into mainstream schools ill-equipped to deal with them, and wants more special schools and referral units. The NUT supports "inclusive education" and demands that schools be given more money to cope with pupils with special needs.

In a passionate debate at the NUT conference in Harrogate, many delegates were reluctant to countenance exclusion, despite several ac-

counts of violent incidents. A five-year-old was said to have given a teacher a black eye, while in other schools pupils had hurled chairs at teachers and vandalised their cars.

Richard Rieser, from Hackney, in east London, said children were being demonised by the press. "There is an unwillingness to accept that children don't just hit people because they don't like them. Something has happened to those children in society."

The conference backed a resolution expressing concern at the rising level of exclusions and blaming underfunding, wider problems in society and persistent denigration of teachers by the Government and media. It also blamed league tables for encouraging schools to rid themselves of low-achievers.

Delegates also agreed that members should be balloted on a refusal to teach pupils who presented an "unacceptable safety risk", especially when a head teacher's decision to exclude a pupil was overturned.

The NASUWT annual conference in Bournemouth called yesterday for more special schools and pupil referral units, dubbed "sin bins", to take troublemakers. Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary, said: "Schools were strict

for the scrapping of independent appeals panels which send pupils back to school after both the head and governors agree to expel them.

Left-wing teachers in the NUT were warned not to challenge a new government, with a majority vote in favour of that action," he said.

Anticipating a Labour government, he said he expected it to consult the NUT on policy.

There can be no national disruption, no confrontation with a new government, without a majority vote in favour of that action," he said.

He added: "You could give our school all the resourcing, staffing, technology and inspirational teachers in the world for years and our kids would never meet the na-

school inspectorate, for expecting too much from inner-city children. His broadside came as Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the union, called on teachers to be less hostile towards Ofsted and accept that inspectors could play a positive role.

Mr Turner's school will be inspected later this month and he said he could write its inspection report now. "The standards of achievement reached by the pupils are well below the national norms."

He added: "You could give our school all the resourcing, staffing, technology and inspirational teachers in the world for years and our kids would never meet the na-



Nigel Turner told colleagues that some pupils would never reach national norms

Darren and Deans are 'born to fail at school'

By DAVID CHARTER
EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

CHILDREN from inner-city backgrounds are born to fail, a comprehensive school teacher told colleagues at a union conference yesterday.

The "Darren, Deans and Damians" had no chance of reaching national norms of achievement, Nigel Turner, a geography teacher in Nottingham, told the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers.

Mr Turner embarrassed his union's leadership by saying that no amount of extra cash could significantly improve standards for some pupils. He also attacked Ofsted, the

school inspectorate, for expecting too much from inner-city children. His broadside came as Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the union, called on teachers to be less hostile towards Ofsted and accept that inspectors could play a positive role.

Mr Turner's school will be inspected later this month and he said he could write its inspection report now. "The standards of achievement reached by the pupils are well below the national norms."

He added: "You could give our school all the resourcing, staffing, technology and inspirational teachers in the world for years and our kids would never meet the na-

ional norms. I'm afraid that Darren, Dean, Damian, Liam and Nathan can't do it, never will do it, and frankly would not give a damn if they don't do it at all."

Mr Turner refused to confirm that his school was William Crane, a comprehensive lying 83rd out of 85 in the Nottinghamshire GCSE table, where 8 per cent of children achieve five passes at grades A to C.

Mr de Gruchy refused to be drawn into debate about Mr Turner's speech. Asked whether children could be identified as failures by their names, he commented: "I would not have put that interpretation upon it."

'Rat Boy' given four years for toby jug theft

By PAUL WILKINSON

A TEENAGE criminal whose activities earned him the sobriquet Rat Boy was identified publicly yesterday.

Anthony Kennedy was sentenced to four years at a young offenders' institution by Newcastle Crown Court after admitting two burglaries. Judge Harkins did not make an order banning his identification, which he had been entitled to do under the Children and Young Persons Act.

Kennedy, now 17, won his nickname in 1993 from his method of eluding police by living in the service ducts of the Byker Wall housing complex in Newcastle upon Tyne. He stole, often from elderly residents, to feed his addiction to tranquillisers.

Yesterday the court was told that he broke into the home of an 84-year-old man in Byker and stole a toby jug. When arrested he said he could not remember the break-in because he had taken between 30 and 50 Valium pills. He had hidden the jug at a police officer, leaving him with a cut face and black eyes.

In the other burglary, Kennedy had a young accomplice, Brian Forster, for the defence. "He is a very young boy who has become hopelessly addicted to Valium."

The judge told him: "You have to be locked up for a long time to protect the public. I accept what is said in reports, that you desperately want your life to be different, but



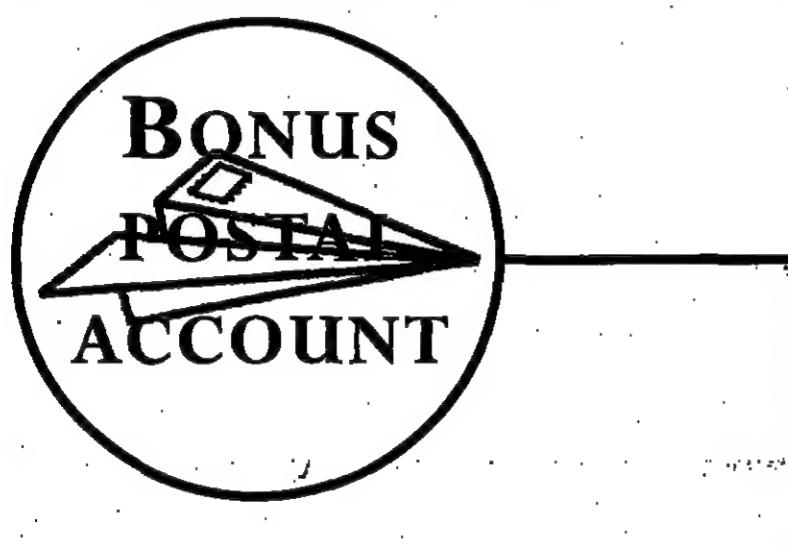
Kennedy: addicted to tranquillisers

you are persistently involved in serious crime."

Kennedy had escaped from youth custody, including specialist secure units, on at least 37 occasions.

Chief Inspector Michael Hassen said after the hearing: "To give a four-year sentence to a 17-year-old is a bold statement. It shows young people that if you commit crimes you can expect a severe sentence. He was only last released on December 13 and between that date and the end of January he was arrested four times for matters including burglary, drugs and assault."

"You reap what you sow. He has been in custody a number of times and is still a persistent offender."



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New hope in liver cancer treatment

By JEREMY LAURANCE, HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

A METHOD of delivering anti-cancer drugs directly to the liver could save 1,000 deaths from bowel cancer a year, researchers said yesterday.

The liver is the most common site of spread in bowel cancer. Scientists from the Imperial Cancer Research Fund studied 4,000 patients who had drugs infused directly into the blood supply to their liver and found that survival was increased by 5 per cent.

Richard Gray, one of the team from the fund's cancer studies unit in Oxford, said: "Even if this treatment were only moderately effective, it could prevent about 1,000 deaths a year in the UK and more than 10,000 worldwide." The charity's researchers are now undertaking the biggest study of cancer treatment in China to confirm the results.

Bowel cancer is the third most common cancer in Britain, with about 31,500 new cases a year. It is the second highest cause of cancer deaths. Scientists in Ohio have made the first artificial human chromosomes, which could eventually offer a cure for

inherited diseases (Bronwen Maddox writes). Researchers at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland and Athersys, the team's company that owns the rights to the new technology, report in *Nature Genetics* that they have made a miniature human chromosome which can replicate in the same way as natural chromosomes.

The artificial chromosome might offer a way of transporting a new gene into a cell to correct a genetic defect. It could help to cure inherited diseases such as cystic fibrosis and possibly some forms of cancer.

Huntingdon Willard, senior author of the study, said yesterday that the significance of the work was that "it gives us a fresh approach to gene therapy. People have been so frustrated by gene therapy, which has not lived up to the hype."

In the past, gene therapy has generally relied on viruses to deliver genes into a cell's chromosomes, but that has proved to be a hit-and-miss approach, and also carries the risk of causing genetic damage.

Hormone spray can help to keep children dry at night

THE widely held opinion that childhood enuresis or bed-wetting is the result of psychological upset may be mistaken, recent research has suggested.

Careful investigations have failed to show any correlation between bed-wetting in children and such upsetting events as going to new schools, moving house, parental, financial or marital disasters, or even adoption.

The joint report in the *British Journal of Clinical Practice* by child psychiatrists from six Italian universities suggests that the high incidence of behavioural problems exhibited by children who wet their beds are the result of their enuresis, not the cause.

Shame of what the child regards as continuing infantile behaviour and fear of punishment are often increased by a lack of understanding from parents. Those fears may prolong or exacerbate the enuresis.

The Italian doctors have been comparing two different pharmacological approaches to bed-wetting. The use of a small dose of a mild tricyclic antidepressant taken by mouth has been compared with the effect of using desmopressin, an artificially produced anti-diuretic hormone which is absorbed through the nose with the help of a nasal puffer.

Danish research workers demonstrated between 1985 and 1990 that enuretic children

did not produce so much of the natural anti-diuretic hormone, which controls urine flow, at night as did those children who became dry at a normal age.

The tricyclic antidepressants are effective in the treatment of enuresis not so much because they improve a child's mood, but because they alter its sleep pattern and

affect the response of the muscles of the bladder.

The trial showed that there was a significant decrease in the number of wet beds when either treatment was used. But it was greater with the intranasal hormone.

DR THOMAS STUTTAFFORD



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Pioneer spacecraft boldly goes to the final frontier

By NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR

THE American space agency Nasa has pulled the plug on its most distant emissary, the spacecraft *Pioneer 10*.

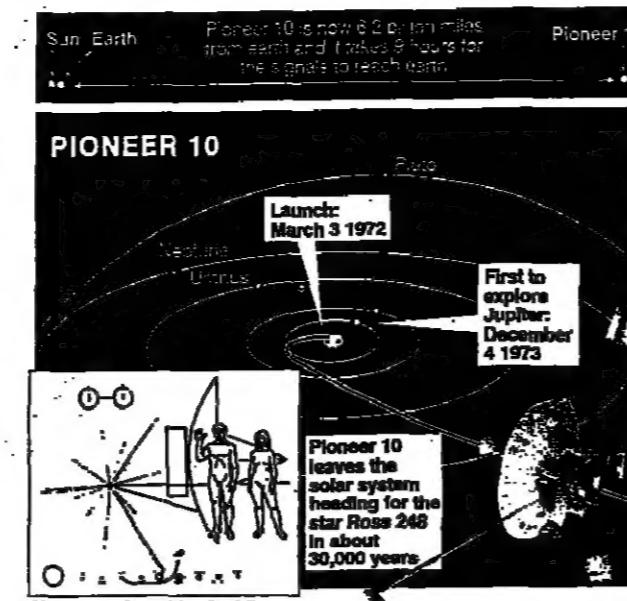
Launched in March 1972 to explore Jupiter, *Pioneer 10* became the first spacecraft to fly beyond Mars and the first to be placed on a trajectory to escape from the solar system. Now more than six billion miles away, *Pioneer 10* has long since left its original mission behind. But until Monday evening, its signal — a mere 2.5 billionths of a trillionth of a watt by the time it reaches Earth — was still being picked up by Nasa.

With only one experiment still working and its power supply dwindling, *Pioneer 10* no longer justifies the cost of keeping it in touch. Nasa will save several million dollars a year by leaving the spacecraft to drift unaided into the dark.

The last signal was received at 8.45pm on Monday via a 230ft dish near Madrid, part of Nasa's Deep Space Network. The signal had taken more than nine hours to travel from the spacecraft, at a speed of 186,000 miles per second.

Larry Lasher, the project manager, said it was an emotional moment for some of the controllers. "Some of them have been on this mission for 20 years and this is their last day," Dr Lasher said. "It was quite traumatic, quite a loss for those people."

Like its sister *Pioneer 11*, which went silent in 1995, *Pioneer 10* is powered by heat



from radioactive pellets which generate electricity. Today there is enough power only for the onboard computer, the antenna and its one remaining probe.

But James Van Allen, of the University of Iowa, the space scientist responsible for that experiment, believes that it can still provide useful information about the heliopause, the point at which the influence of the Sun finally peters out.

When *Pioneer 10* was launched, he said, that was thought to be barely beyond the orbit of Jupiter. In fact, the spacecraft has already gone ten years further, but has yet to reach it. The most credible estimate is that it lies at least 120 astronomical units away.

Despite Nasa's decision to stop tracking *Pioneer 10*, Professor Van Allen still hopes to get some data back. Dr Lasher has arranged for it to be used as a target for people learning to track objects deep in space, so its signals will be detected

from time to time without additional expense. Until it finally dies, towards the end of this year or some time next, some data may continue to be gathered.

Even when both *Pioneers* are dead, data from interstellar space will continue to come from the better-equipped *Voyager 1* and *Voyager 2* spacecraft, which should have enough power to keep going until about 2020, assuming that Nasa's budget remains intact.

Pioneer 10 took the first close-up photographs of Jupiter and its moons, discovered intense zones of radiation around the giant planet and measured its magnetic field. It proved that the asteroid belt was not as destructive a minefield as had once been feared, and it paved the way for later, more sophisticated probes.

Pioneer 10 also carries a plaque designed by the astronomer Carl Sagan, in case it should ever fall into the hands of another civilisation. The gold-plated plaque contains diagrams of a man and a woman, and a celestial map in an effort to help aliens to work out where the spacecraft originated.

However, Professor Van Allen called the plaque "a whimsical touch" and said that the chances of it being found were slim. "The chances of it ever being recovered by any intelligent civilisation that will sit down with a magnifying glass and try to decide it is very remote, I think. That's a mild way of putting it."



Malcolm MacDonald arriving at court yesterday

Alcoholic football star gets road ban

By PAUL WILKINSON

THE former soccer star Malcolm MacDonald was banned from driving for two years yesterday after being caught three times over the legal limit.

The former England, Newcastle United and Arsenal player, 47, told magistrates that he had turned to drink after his career ended at the age of 29 when he developed osteoarthritis in his knees. He said that he drank up to a bottle of whisky a day to deaden the pain.

The offence took place in February when MacDonald was on his way home after hosting his hour-long football phone-in on Century Radio in Gateshead. MacDonald, who on March 11 had pleaded guilty to drink-driving, arrived at Newcastle upon Tyne Magistrates' Court yesterday with his girlfriend Carol Johnson, 45, the former wife of Brian Johnson, lead singer with rock band AC/DC. He also received an 18-month probation order and was told to pay £40 costs.

MacDonald, of Jesmond, Tyne and Wear, is seeking help for his alcohol problem with the North East branch of the charity Turning Point. Peter Lough, the group's manager, told the court: "He is over the first couple of hours



"Supermac" in his heyday at Newcastle

die. The easy bit is getting off the drink with medication and support. The hard part is staying off. If Malcolm can sustain his sobriety he can be a great help to us and have input in our five-a-side teams."

MacDonald's radio show has been taken over by other North East soccer stars. Century Radio said that a decision on MacDonald would be made at the next management meeting but the chances of his returning to the show were "not hopeful".

Youths risk lives again on death crash track

A train driver narrowly avoided hitting a group of up to ten children playing on a railway line at Leeds where two teenagers had been killed just 24 hours earlier. Railtrack said it was appalled that the children — some as young as five — continued to trespass on the stretch of track where the two boys had died on Sunday.

Police named the dead boys, both from Leeds, as Mark Ashcroft, 13, of Halton Moor, and Ricky Smith, 15, of Halton. They were struck by a train from Middlesbrough to Manchester airport at 9.30pm, shortly after police were alerted that youths had been seen throwing stones at trains. Another teenager with them escaped injury.

Forest in Europe

A group of Nottingham Forest fans who were arrested before a match in Munich last year and spent three weeks in jail are taking claims of wrongful arrest to the European Court of Human Rights. Cases against all 11 were dropped.

Moorland fire

A fire, thought to have been caused by controlled burning that got out of hand, swept 500 acres of moorland at Banchory in Deeside, engulfing parts of the Hill of Fare and damaging nesting sites of grouse, meadow pipits and curlews.

Head accused

A primary school head has been suspended after allegations that he smacked two pupils. Police interviewed Kevin Crabbe from Wavene Primary School, near Hull, after the mother of a 9-year-old boy made a complaint.

Glass attack

An off-duty Cambridge police woman was struck in the face with a broken glass in an attack outside a pub at Weymouth, Dorset, on Monday night. She had to have stitches. Five people, including a woman, have been arrested.

Ding gone

London's town crier has had his 17lb handbell stolen. Peter Moore, 53, last saw the 12in copper and brass bell on Monday afternoon when he put it down to chat to tourists who were visiting Tower Hill Pageant.

Selling bee

Bee Health, of Scarborough, North Yorkshire, has won a £16 million deal to supply a natural remedy to Japan. The company is the world's largest refiner of propolis, manufactured by bees to protect their hives from infection.

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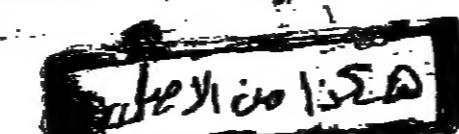
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ELECTION 97

All aboard the Labour campaign mystery tour

BLAIR'S BUS

BY BEN MACINTYRE

TONY BLAIR's campaign rolled into the heart of England yesterday on 18 bus wheels, kicking off the first day of official campaigning with a flurry of high technology and old fashioned baby-kissing.

The sleek, grey Blair bus is a vehicle more used to roving around the country with the likes of the pop group Simply Red. For the not-simply-red anymore Labour Party it has been equipped with a dozen telephone lines, a fully computerised mobile office, black carpets, a well-stocked fridge and a curtailed salon in the back with a horseshoe shaped banquette where Mr Blair will give interviews en route.

The vehicle on which he will be living for much of the next month is not your average mobile home. On board yesterday were a brace of armed Special Branch officers, the official party photographer, a fax machine, television, video and a posse of Mr Blair's closest media advisers.

Nothing can be seen behind the black-tinted glass save wraith-like, Mandelonian shadows, energetically flitting back and forth.

After so long waiting for this moment, the Labour team was leaving nothing to chance, from the complimentary croissants for the assembled journalists in the two other buses trailing behind "Into the future with Tony Blair" to the Union Jack painted on the roof of the Blair bus, presumably to entice any low flying or otherwise floating voters.

Pop stars specialise in producing the unexpected. Mr Blair is concentrating on avoiding just that, and any hint of complacency. As his driver Chris Cox observed, taking Mr Blair and his troops around is "definitely easier" than nannying Deep Purple.

The watchwords of the Blair campaign are the three Rs: to Remind voters of the Tory record, Reassure them that Labour is safe, and spell out the Rewards of a future Labour government. To this might be added Restraining the accompanying press and Risk avoidance. Even the smallest error evokes dark looks, as when the almond croissants



The Blairs on the stump in Northampton yesterday after the party leaders unveiled their campaign "battle buses". Mr Major's first stop was at a DIY centre in Croydon

for the press ran out. The Blair team loves acronyms, and it was with visible pleasure that his advisers declared that TB (Tony Blair) left MBT (Millbank Tower) after his morning Q & A within minutes of the ETD. "You may be slightly concussed," warned a press aide as the buses rolled into Northampton. And, sure enough, in the town's 700-year-old market place, the almond-dusted hacks were herded, their mobile phones lowing gently, into a metal-fenced pen. This, it was ex-

plained, was to avoid the press "scrumping" around the Labour leader. Mr Blair's remarks on the ensuing walkabout would be relayed to the pen by a public address system, we were assured.

All morning rumours had been circulating that the "people's podium", Mr Blair's answer to John Major's soapbox, would be a piece of technological wizardry. It turned out disappointingly, to be a box. A grey box, with some non-slip red carpet nailed on top, but a box

nonetheless. Mr Blair bounded on to it. "Hello, Northampton," he said in a crowd pleasing welcome surely first practised in school days with the Ugly Rumours and perhaps inspired by the bus's previous occupants. "Yeah," said a chorus of Northampton voices. "God bless you Tony," added one.

The location of the walkabout was kept secret until the last moment to avoid any organised heckling, and shopkeepers appeared wholly surprised, but quietly gratified, to

be treated to a sudden sermon on the box.

Mr Blair and his wife plunged into the crowd. The PA system immediately coughed and died, and the assembled press broke out of their enclosure and stampeded after them to form the traditional scrum.

Despite the cliché, politi-

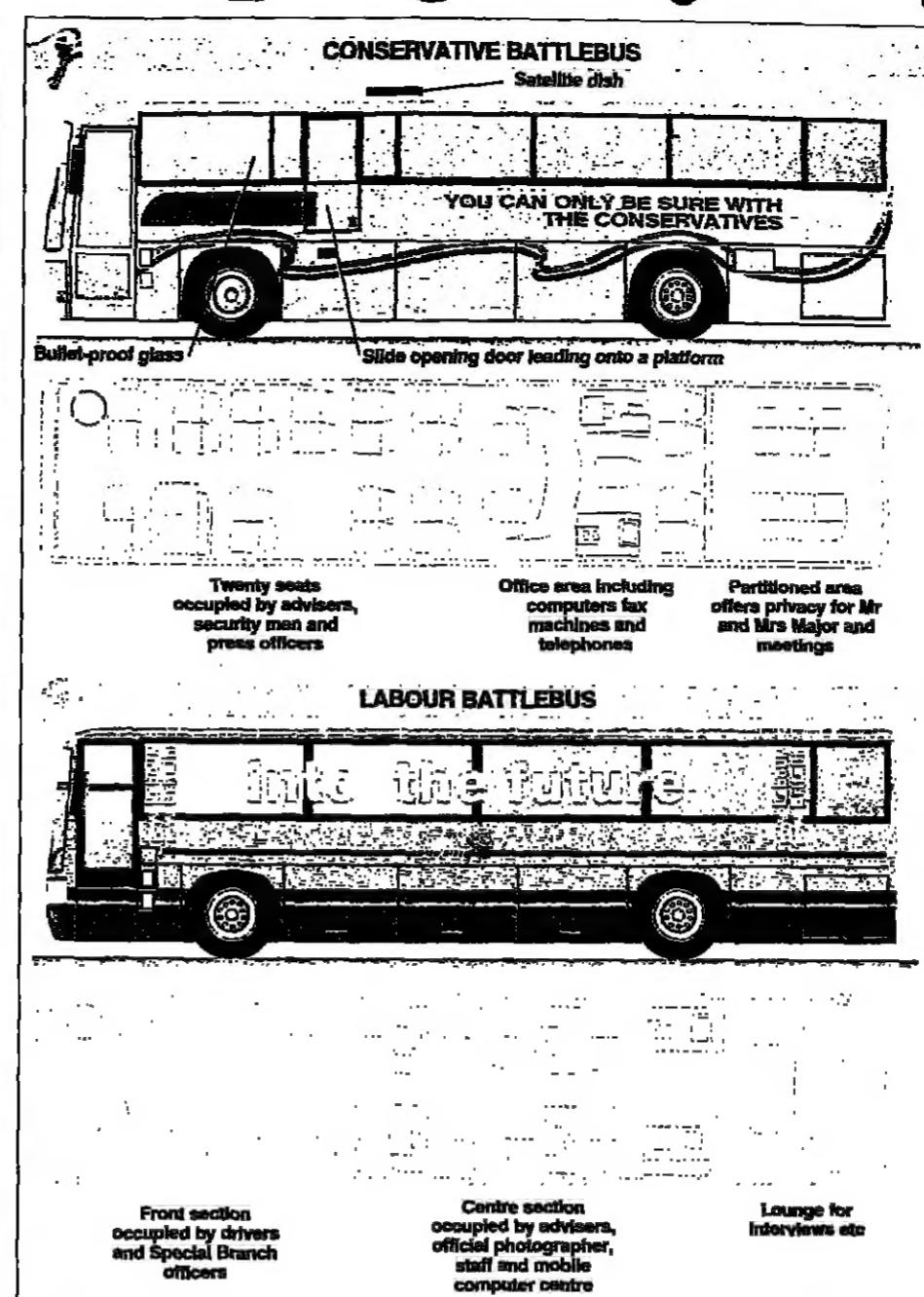
cians usually avoid baby kissing, but the exhilarated Blairs pucker up at regular intervals across the town square.

"I bet there's handsome eyes behind those shades," Cherie told Chris Lacey, a man with thick, wraparound dark glasses who, luckily for her, turned out not to be blind. He asked for a kiss, she obliged and was

declared to be "A pretty good kisser".

Mr Blair, meanwhile,

planned a smacker without blushing on an ice-cream stained toddler, who then made strenuous efforts to rub it off. "Not sure about that reaction," said Mr Blair. "I'll put you down as an undecided."



End of road for a trusty soapbox

MAJOR'S BUS

JOHN MAJOR's soapbox, mentioned in *Tory dispatches* for its battle role in the 1992 general election, faces the threat of redundancy (Arthur Leathley writes).

Only two weeks after being unveiled again as the Prime Minister's electioneering weapon, the tape-up wooden box is to be "downsized" in the shadow of a grander rival. A gleaming metallic and much larger version of the box is about to enter the fray.

Senior Tories pointed proudly to the new platform, which slides out from Mr Major's campaign bus, as a key gadget from which the Prime Minister will address crowds across the country.

The platform on stilts enables Mr Major to step from a side-door of the coach and address crowds from three feet above the ground. Apparently the brainchild of Brian Mawhinney, the Tory party chairman, it will enable the Prime Minister more room to manoeuvre when addressing crowds.

The bus hums with electronic gadgetry to ensure maximum security and that the Prime Minister maintains constant contact with ministers. Computers, fax machines and digital telephones have been fitted on the gleaming red, white and blue vehicle, which has only 20 seats because the rear has been converted into office space.

Emblazoned with the Tory party slogan "You can only be sure with the Conservatives" and a facsimile of Mr Major's signature.

It is expected to travel more than 9,000 miles during the election campaign.

Defector urges Conservative waverers to join him in new 'One Nation' party



Howarth: abandoned the Tories in 1995

THE Tory defector Alan Howarth joined Tony Blair on the election platform yesterday as part of a drive to convince Tory waverers that New Labour was now "the one-nation party" in British politics (Jill Sherman writes).

Mr Howarth, who defected to Labour on the eve of the 1995 Conservative conference, has been appointed to head a taskforce to appeal to disillusioned Tory voters. The recently selected candidate for the safe Labour seat of Newport East is to write to thousands of Conservatives across the country, including councillors, who have been identified as potential switchers to Labour. "My

message to them is simple. New Labour is real. It has changed for the better," Mr Howarth said. "It represents the best hope for our country. It is the one-nation party in British politics today. Support it and it will change Britain for the better."

Mr Howarth said that he had left the Tory party "because it had changed for the worse" and had not had a single second thought since he had done so. "The party I was a member of has taken a march to the extreme of politics. It has lost sight of what it once stood for and abandoned the decent one-nation tradition in British politics," Labour

Leading article, page 21

Best to hold your nose, should you venture round Westminster

Perhaps the most brazen of all the negative campaigners yesterday were the Liberal Democrats. At the party's 7.30am press conference, the media were treated to a Punch & Judy show. Punch and Judy (Tony and John) kept bopping each other on the head. This was meant to convey Liberal Democrat disgust at "negative campaigning".

The fact that it was also a way for Paddy to hop both his rivals on the head was never mentioned. By 8am the smell of coffee was already mingled with the odour of sanctity.

Then came the Labour press conference. Tony Blair, who has professed his disgust at negative campaigning, poked styl at the Tories' difficulties over "sleaze" allegations. This was not (we were to understand) negative campaigning. It did not count as negative, because the Tories had "brought it on themselves". He then attacked John Major for lacking leadership. Ah. So criticising people is not nega-



MATTHEW PARRIS

Dobbs (who has been negotiating for the Tories over the terms) say almost exactly this, last week, on the news. Nobody noticed, so Mr Major had rehearsed the challenge and served it up again.

He was tackled on the subject of Piers Merchant.

Ten minutes earlier, we had seen a dazed-looking Michael Heseltine wandering around. The Deputy Prime Minister tried last week to stuff out Mr Merchant's too, was holding his nose.

Liberal Democrats, page 13

GET FRESH FOR SPRING

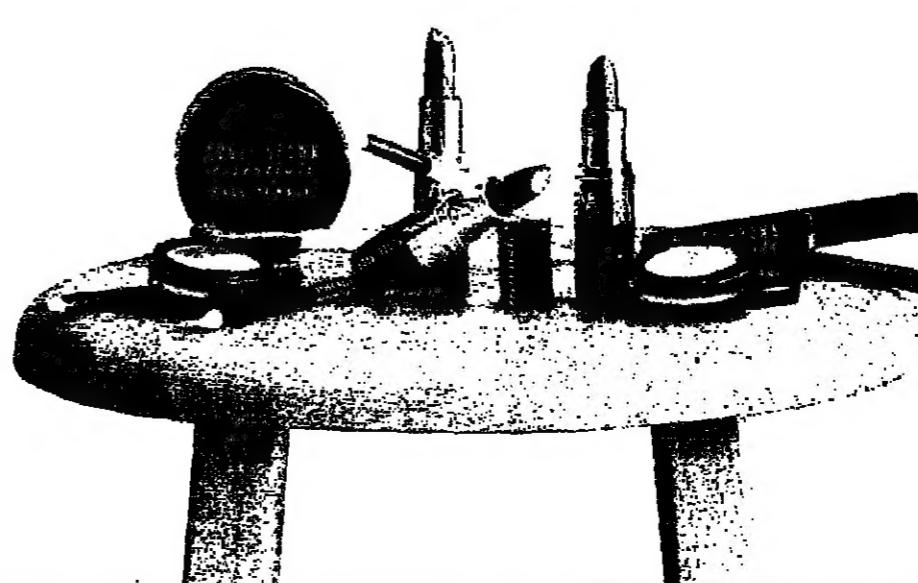
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ELECTION 97

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Matthew Parris



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Peter Barnard



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Peter Riddell



Simon Jenkins

■ BEST POLITICAL TEAM



Philip Webster



Jill Sherman

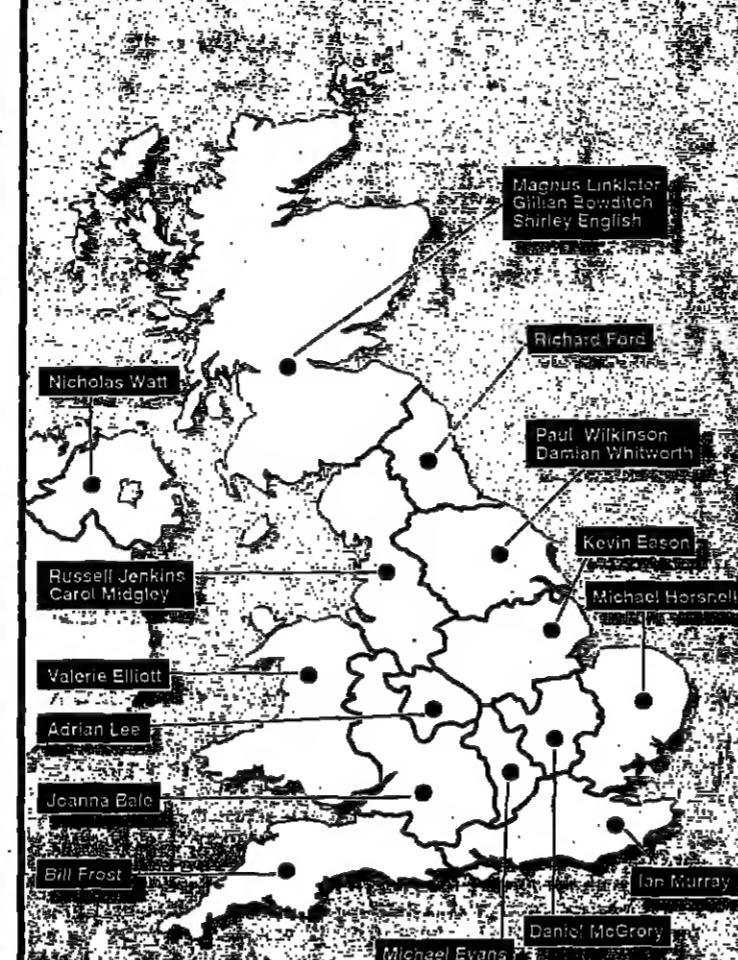


Polly Newton

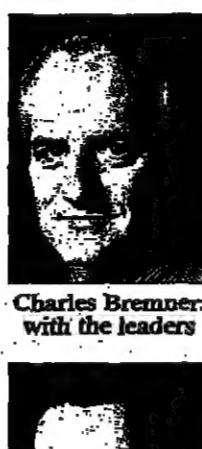


Andrew Pierce

CORRESPONDENTS IN THE REGIONS



■ THE BEST NATIONWIDE COVERAGE



Charles Bremner: with the leaders



Ben Macintyre: with the leaders



Gillian Bowditch: in Scotland



Shirley English: in Scotland



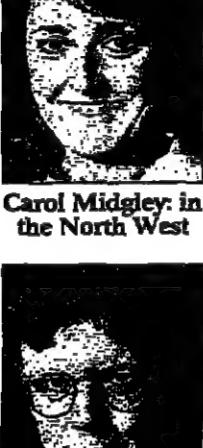
Nicholas Watt: in Northern Ireland



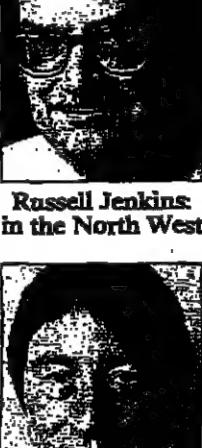
Adrian Lee: in the West Midlands



Kevin Eason: in the East Midlands



Carol Midgley: in the North West



Russell Jenkins: in the North West



Valerie Elliott: in Wales



Richard Ford: in the North East



Joanna Balf: in West of England



Damian Whitworth: in Yorkshire



Michael Horsnell: East Anglia



Bill Frost: in the South West

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Collect four membership tokens and attach them to the direct debit form which will be published again on Saturday.



Save £10 on an RHS video

The Times, in association with the RHS offers you the opportunity to get an hour-long RHS gardening video, worth £14.99 by mail order, for only £3.60 including p.p. You can choose the video from the eight RHS Practical Guides featured in *The Times* yesterday. You can also save £2 off a choice of 14 RHS videos (normally £14.99 through mail order). An order form with all 14 titles is available in *The Times* tomorrow and will be printed again on Friday.

HOW TO APPLY

Select any one of the eight RHS Practical Guides video featured in *The Times* on Monday. Then send three different names and address labels from the list, accompanied by the completed video order form which was printed on Monday. Make cheques or postal orders payable to RHS Video Order, and send them to: RHS Practical Gardening Video Order, PO Box 130, RHS, Wisley, Surrey GU24 0HS. Applications for RHS Orders' videos must be received no later than April 11, 1997. Another order form will appear on Friday.

THE TIMES

THE ROYAL
HORTICULTURAL
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GARDEN VIDEO
TOKEN 3

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CHANGING TIMES

Cryer's death leaves widow holding the political baby

BY DAMIAN WHITWORTH

LIKE many other women with grown-up working daughters, Ann Cryer was looking after her grandson yesterday. However, she had other things on her mind.

There were meetings with Labour Party workers, who were busy moving her campaign headquarters into new premises after a fire at the old offices last week. Then she had to escort Harriet Harman, Labour's Shadow Social Security Secretary, on a visit to a nursery school. In the afternoon, she was meeting a stonemason to discuss the wording for a plaque on her husband's grave.

Bob Cryer, the former MP for Bradford South who was killed in a car crash less than three years ago, was previously the member for Keighley, which he represented for nine years. Now his widow is standing for the west Yorkshire seat, which includes the Bronte tourist town of Haworth and nearby Ilkley.

Mrs Cryer is seeking to oust Gary Waller, the Conservative, who has a majority of

3,500. A swing of slightly more than 3 per cent would be enough, so it is a seat that Labour has to win if it is to get a majority. However, the local party has had an uneasy time.

The decision of the national party to impose a women-only shortlist was opposed by many. Mrs Cryer, 57, was approached to stand as a unity candidate who was acceptable to those alarmed by the prospect of a sharp-suited new

LABOUR

Labourite fighting the seat. Mrs Cryer, who had worked as her husband's assistant, had been approached to fight the by-election in Bradford South after his death. "It was too soon. I wasn't up to it," she said. "When they asked me to stand in Keighley, I had to think about it for five weeks."

Eventually it was Tony Benn who persuaded her. He said: "You can't remain a widow all your life."

Her husband had been hugely popular in the constituency, but lost his seat when a boundary change brought in Tory voters from Ilkley. Her image as a grandmother of five is also valuable. The two-year-old with her yesterday was called Robert because he was born two months after his grandfather's death.

But while Mrs Cryer insists that Keighley is the only seat for which she would stand, it is clear that politics is a family love affair. Her son, John, is standing as a Labour candidate in Hornchurch against the Tory Robin Squire, who has a 9,000 majority.

She recoils when the word dynasty is mentioned. "I'm not going to be a Bob Cryer mark two," she insisted. "We shared a great many interests but there are other things that I am probably better informed about and more interested in than my husband was, such as early years education and the benefits system."

Nevertheless, it is impossible not to see in her many of the political instincts of her late husband, to whom she refers as "the lifetime rebel".

She uses the word "bolshie" admiringly about young Asian women in her constituency who have formed their own women's group and are finding jobs.

Mr Waller, who has done better than the national average in retaining the vote in previous elections, is planning to campaign hard on his record. He says he has been building bridges with local ethnic groups and opposing



The late Bob Cryer with his wife, Ann



Ann Cryer with her grandson Robert, two, at a nursery in Keighley yesterday



Slugging it out: the Lib Dems' puppet show

Ashdown takes a swipe at Punch and Judy politics

BY POLLY NEWTON, POLITICAL REPORTER

JOHN MAJOR and Tony Blair were branded the Punch and Judy of politics by Paddy Ashdown yesterday as the Liberal Democrats sought to shift sleaze from the top of the election agenda.

Mr Ashdown, speaking at the start of his party's full-scale campaign, argued that voters were fed up with confrontational politics. He challenged his opponents to focus on "the big issues" of education and the health service.

The Liberal Democrats began their first early-morning press conference of the campaign with a short film featuring caricature puppets of Mr Blair and Mr Major beating each

other with sticks in a Punch and Judy hut. In squeaky voices, each puppet protested that he had thought of a particular policy first and insisted he would implement it before the other.

Later, Mr Ashdown unveiled a billboard poster in London on the same theme.

He said the Liberal Democrats wanted "an honest and positive campaign". He accused Labour of offering a "false prospectus" on education by claiming standards could be improved without more spending.

Mr Ashdown said that Labour's planned abolition of the assisted places scheme - which gives some children government financial help to attend private schools - would raise only £150 million. After three years that would have reduced class sizes by only one pupil.

The claim was later denied by Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor, who said that the Liberal Democrats were "absolutely wrong". Mr Brown insisted that Labour was determined "over time" to cut class sizes for children aged

five, six and seven, and said the amount of money the party could recoup by abolishing assisted places had been confirmed by independent experts from the National Foundation for Educational Research.

The Liberal Democrats' manifesto, to be published on Friday, will promise that the party would put up on the basic rate of income tax to allow an investment of at least £2 billion a year in education. Mr Ashdown said: "Only by investing more in books and equipment, cutting class sizes and providing nursery education can we give our children the best possible start in life."

No party should make promises without explaining how they would be paid for. "People are right to be angry that the Conservatives promised tax cuts year on year and then brought in 22 tax rises, including VAT on domestic fuel. This must not happen again."

Pressed on the party's plans for the Tatton constituency of Neil Hamilton, who is alleged to have taken payments in return for asking parliamentary questions, Mr Ashdown would say only that there was still "one scene in this unpleasant drama which is yet to be played out" - the verdict of the Tatton constituency party.

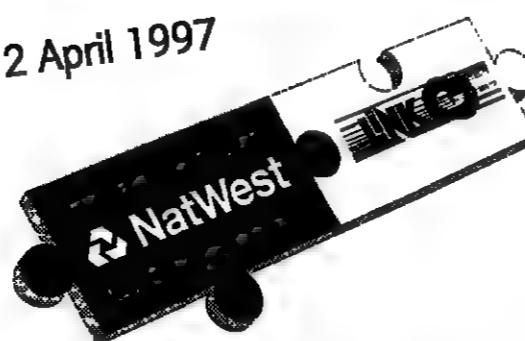
"The right thing now is to get back to the big issues in this campaign. I am really worried that we can get through four weeks of campaign talking about nothing but sleaze. It's our intention to move things on to other issues."

Lord Holme of Cheltenham, the Liberal Democrats' election campaign director, denied that the Punch and Judy puppet show was the kind of negative campaigning for which the party has criticised its opponents. He said that it was a humorous representation of what many voters really felt.

LIBERAL
DEMOCRATS

News Release

2 April 1997

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CONSERVATIVES

Coverage: four pilot schemes to be widened this month to all four-year-olds whose parents want it.

Method of payment: a voucher for £1,100 given to parents, who pass them to nurseries, which cash them via a private company. Complicated financial transaction between local and central government for places at LEA schools.

Organisation: parents apply to nurseries. Assumed that more places will spring up to meet demand.

Attitude to vouchers: encourage diversity of provision and create more parental power and involvement.

Money promised: £185 million a year on top of existing £555 million LEA spending.

LABOUR

Coverage: all four-year-olds whose parents want it, within 18 months of winning power. Provision for three-year-olds "as resources allow".

Method of payment: central government would give the money to authorities, who would provide places in nursery schools and reception classes and buy places in private and voluntary nurseries and playgroups. No tipping up fees in expensive private schools.

Organisation: LEAs would run forums in partnership with private and voluntary sectors to assess and meet local demand.

Attitude to vouchers: parents in receipt of them would have them honoured. Thereafter they would be scrapped.

Money promised: same as Tories.

LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

Coverage: all children aged 3 or 4 whose parents want it. Majority of programme implemented in one Parliament.

Method of payment: central government would give money to authorities, which would decide how to meet the commitment.

Organisation: local education authorities would work with private and voluntary sectors, but the methods would vary from one authority to another.

Attitude to vouchers: "an underfunded gimmick". They would be abolished and replaced by government grant as soon as practicable.

Money promised: about £800 million: early education will have "first claim" on the extra £2 billion for education.

BALLOT 97
THE TIMES GUIDE TO ELECTION ISSUES

13. Nursery education

Small people are a big issue



Head start: children who go to nursery are months ahead by the age of seven

is long-term. Another is that this is seen as primarily a women's issue and has tended to be dismissed by the political establishment.

But as report after report in the late 1980s and early 1990s showed the importance of expanding this area of education, John Major's Government gradually came round to its merits. At the end of 1993, the Prime Minister acknowledged universal nursery education as an ambition, but only "when we have the resources". Now it will finally come to fruition, for four-year-olds at least, which every party wins power.

The political argument centres now not on whether, but how, such provision should be made. After some disagreement between Gillian Shephard, the Education Secretary, and John Major, it was decided that parents of four-year-olds should be offered a voucher worth £1,100 a year, which they could exchange for a place in a local authority nursery, a reception class, a private nursery school or a playgroup. This scheme has

operated in four pilot areas for a year and is due to go nationwide this week.

Vouchers have the advantage of encouraging a diversity of provision, including voluntary and private. They also have two unavoidable disadvantages. Their bureaucracy is costly (estimated at £20 million a year once they go nationwide) and they subsidise parents who were already happy to pay private nursery fees.

The biggest problem with the pilot projects, though, is one that could be remedied, albeit at higher cost. As a recent report from the Committee on Education Select Committee pointed out: "One of the main effects of the scheme appears to be that more young four-year-olds are likely to attend reception class. We believe this is quite wrong."

Reception classes are the first class in a primary school, usually attended by five-year-olds or "rising-fives", who are within three months of their fifth birthday. In private or

voluntary pre-schooling, the Children Act requires at least one member of staff for every one and three and four-year-olds. At state nursery schools, there is usually one staff member per 13 children. But reception classes can have as many as 35 pupils.

This is bad for children young. Emotionally they can find it hard to cope. Educationally, studies show that attending reception class at four adds nothing to their future performance.

Yet, as the select committee found, many primary schools in the pilot areas have been telling parents that if they do not send their children to reception classes, they will not gain a place at five. The result of this pressure is that some voluntary playgroups may have to close. As the report points out: "If this were to happen, parental choice could be limited. This was not the reason for which the voucher scheme was introduced." If the Conservatives win, they could solve this problem by stipulating that vouchers will be valid only for classes in which the

staff/pupil ratio is no greater than 1:13. This would, however, be expensive, which is why Labour is no more prepared to guarantee that its nursery provision would not be in reception classes.

Labour promises a place for all four-year-olds within 18 months of taking power, organised through "partnership agreements" between local education authorities (LEAs) and the private and voluntary sectors. The LEAs would buy places in outside nurseries on behalf of local four-year-olds, but parents would not be able to top up the fees at more expensive nursery schools as they can with vouchers. So presumably only those private schools offering places costing no more than about £1,100 a year would be eligible — and that Labour is offering no more money than the Tories.

In time, the party hopes to provide places for all three-year-olds too, but the aim is hedged with all the usual "when resources are available" constraints. In the meantime, it promises to set up 25 pilot "early excellence centres", which will combine childcare and nursery education, the childcare element being paid for by parents who can afford it. Most learned studies on nursery education recommend this combination as the most promising approach — but at the moment the plans are very small-scale.

Only the Liberal Democrats propose nursery education for all three and four-year-olds whose parents want it. And they would allow four-year-olds entry into reception classes only in smaller classes and "where this does not undermine existing nursery education". The Lib Dems are also the only party prepared to put their money where their policy is. Of the £2 billion they have earmarked for education from adding a penny to the basic rate of income tax, early years education would have "the first claim".

Mondays Britain's place in the world

WHAT THEY SAY

"Nursery vouchers give parents a real choice by placing purchasing power in their hands. The success of the scheme shows the critics were wrong."

Gillian Shephard, Education Secretary

"I know that Gillian Shephard believes in nursery education. I know that she doesn't believe in vouchers. We all love Gillian Shephard, but if you don't win the battles you are of no use."

David Blunkett, Shadow Education Secretary

"It's a cash-for-votes bribe. Vouchers drop through letterboxes before the election. Many will find there's nowhere to redeem them because vouchers can't ensure the rapid provision of buildings, equipment and teachers."

Don Foster, Lib-Dem education spokesman

"For too long the early years of a child's life have been seen as the private concern of the parents. The State has intervened only at points of crisis when a child was thought to be at risk."

Margaret Hodge, Labour education spokeswoman

"I would like to go down in history as the Education Secretary who introduced universal nursery education."

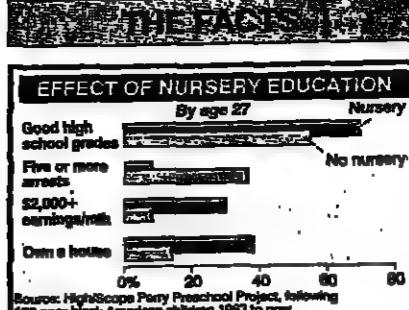
Margaret Thatcher, 1972

"Nursery education for all isn't realistic."

Kenneth Clarke, 1991

"If you have got to make a choice between good nursery schools and a good university then I would advise any country to fund the nursery school."

Christopher Bell, director of learning at the Royal Society of Arts



□ Forty-six per cent of mothers say they do not have the nursery school or day nursery provision they want, according to the census.

□ Provision of free local-authority places depends markedly on where children live, according to the Audit Commission. In some authorities, about a quarter of three and four-year-olds are given a place; in others, the figure is over 90 per cent.

□ Playgroups have the highest numbers of children attending, and day nurseries the lowest. Playgroups are more popular in rural areas than in towns and cities.

□ Research by Newcastle University found that pupils with pre-school education score significantly higher on entry to primary school than those without, even if they have attended only playgroup.

□ Local authorities in England and Wales spend about £1.4 billion a year on pre-school education and care. In the private and voluntary sectors, parents spend about £1.3 billion a year.

Sleaze claims are too sticky to allow the Tories a fresh start

The Tories tried to draw a line yesterday under their self-destructive, disastrous first fortnight of the general election campaign. Their theory was: give journalists the chance to get the "sleaze" virus out of their system by putting questions on the issue to John Major, and today the party could make a fresh start with the launch of its election manifesto. The Tories may, indeed, should, be given a clear run for their manifesto, but the "sleaze" story will not disappear as simply as that.

Mr Major's attempt to take the high ground was unconvincing. Until Monday, Tory officials had been briefing against Neil Hamilton and Piers Merchant, and doing their utmost to persuade the two MPs to follow the example of Tim Smith and stand down. So it was a bit rich of Mr Major to stand back and say that nothing has been proved and that it was all right for the MPs who have protested their innocence to stand, with the charges being considered after the election.

Of course, natural justice must be observed and Mr Major is right to give warning that Mr Hamilton is no fool, nor is he merely an innocent victim. Of course, he deserves his chance to answer allegations about receiving cash from Mohamed Al Fayed, which he has firmly denied. Sir Gordon Downey will have to adjudicate. But this is not the whole story.

Even leaving aside whether certain payments in 1988-89 should have been disclosed under the interpretation of the rules on Members' interests at the time, it is questionable whether any MP should accept, indeed eagerly seek, hos-

pitality on the scale that Mr Hamilton and his wife enjoyed from Mr Al Fayed.

Mr Hamilton's letter to *The Times* on Saturday was less than frank. He says he is "satisfied in his own mind that there was no deliberate misdealing" of Michael Heseltine over his relationship with Ian Greer, the lobbyist who had acted for Mr Al Fayed. However, according to the transcript of his questioning at the Downey inquiry, Mr Hamilton said: "I did not mention the commission payments when I spoke

to Mr Heseltine. I knew that if there were to be another cause for adverse media comment against me... it could be used as very big stick with which to beat me and to cause me to resignation to take place."

Moreover, Mr Hamilton denies any suggestion of impropriety or fraud over his tax returns. But the extract in *The Guardian* suggests that the MP's tax return for 1988-89 included as a deductible expense the cost of a flight which had been paid not by him but by Mr Greer. His reported comment that his accountant prepares his tax return is flimsy: a taxpayer is legally responsible for his returns.

It is all very well for Mr Hamilton to protest against "selective leaking". Even if the cash-for-questions charges are put to one side, Mr Hamilton's other conduct, revealed if not publicly acknowledged, casts doubt on his suitability as an MP. Since the Tory leadership has stepped back, it is now a matter for the voters of Tatton. For them, "sleaze" remains an issue, particularly if the search by Labour and the Liberal Democrats for a credible "anti-corruption" candidate succeeds.



PETER RIDDELL

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SAID ON THE STUMP

The whole of Mr Blair's strategy in creating the boneless wonder that calls itself new Labour is to reassure the electorate in its illusion. But illusion it remains... Imitation, someone said, is the sincerest form of flattery. But imitations are still fakes.

Baroness Thatcher, writing in *The Daily Telegraph*

Can you imagine the situation where Margaret Thatcher would be saying to people, "There are certain MPs I would like not to stand as a candidate but I am sorry there is nothing I can do about it." My case rests.

John Major at morning press conference

I do not know what you may know that I don't. But I don't know all the circumstances.

John Major, questioned on Neil Hamilton at morning press conference

John Major at press conference

I am not going to bow to the witch-hunt mentality.

John Major at press conference

I could have planned it better.

Michael Forsyth on the start of the Scottish Tories' campaign

Kenneth Clarke is supported by a dwindling band of Tory

MPs who also value old Tory traditions. The wagons are circled. It's Clarke's last stand.

Alan Howarth, the former Tory, sharing an election platform with Tony Blair

Tony Blair in Northampton

Turkeys may not vote for Christmas but chickens apparently run away from broadcasts.

John Major, renewing his challenge to Tony Blair for a TV debate

There is no question of a single currency being imposed on the country, slunk through under cover or by a side wind.

Tony Blair in speech to businessmen in Derby

She's a pretty good kisser.

Chris Lacey, a young Northampton voter, after pecking Cherie Blair

Douglas Hogg's cult has been a catalogue of chaos.

Dr Gavin Strang, Shadow Agriculture Minister, campaigning in Chester

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Netanyahu blames Egypt for fanning flames of militancy

ISRAEL'S embattled Prime Minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, angrily accused Egypt last night of "fanning the flames of radicalism" in the Middle East and of helping to push the peace process to its present state of crisis.

Referring to the recent upsurge of violence that has left more than 500 Palestinians injured and to the Arab League's determination to turn back the diplomatic clock and isolate Israel, the Prime Minister said: "It seems to me that Egypt is playing a very unfortunate part in all this by fanning the flames of radicalism rather than inducing a more moderate position. This idea of reactivating the Arab boycott is a key example."

Mr Netanyahu, 47, hit back hard at suggestions made hours earlier in an Israeli newspaper by President Mubarak of Egypt that Israel had brought peacemaking to its lowest point since President Sadat first landed in Jerusalem 20 years ago.

Mr Netanyahu would not be drawn into similar criticisms of Jordan or of King Hussein, whose letter accusing him of pushing the region towards "an abyss of bloodshed" has been made public. He hinted that the King had adopted a different approach in their recent private conversation after King Hussein paid his respects to the mourning families of seven Israeli schoolgirls killed by a Jordanian soldier.

Mr Netanyahu was scathing about the approach adopted by the semi-official Egyptian media which he said was



Christopher Walker, in an interview with Binyamin Netanyahu, finds the Israeli leader relishing his isolation

"the most anti-Semitic in the world" and he ridiculed attempts by the Egyptian leader to argue that he had no control over its content. He said that the peace process was threatened not by Israel, which he said was sticking to the 1993 Oslo peace accords, but by the indirect Palestinian encouragement of Islamic terror.

Speaking only hours after two more Palestinian suicide

6 If we halt housing projects in our own capital, we may as well shut the country,

bombs had exploded in the Gaza Strip, both of which he said were planted not by Hamas, which planted last month's bomb in a Tel Aviv cafe, but by the smaller Islamic Jihad. Mr Netanyahu said the bombs had been a "great setback for peace".

He dismissed suggestions by Palestinian leaders that one of the bombs might have been a suicide attempt and, referring to his earlier charge



Binyamin Netanyahu in the Knesset yesterday. He denies that Israel is responsible for the present crisis

that Yassir Arafat, the Palestinian leader, had recently given the "green light" to the resumption of Islamic terrorism, he said that the Gaza blasts showed "that the traffic lights have not been changed".

Mr Netanyahu called Islamic Jihad and Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement, "an obedient opposition" which acted as proxy for such Palestine Liberation Organisation movements as Mr Arafat's Fatah faction, which had overtly dropped their earlier espousal of terrorism as a weapon. "The whole idea with terrorism is that you cannot fight it physically if you do not fight it morally," the Prime Minister said. "That is to denounce it as a weapon of anything."

During the 45-minute interview he made clear that Israel would remain unshakable in its refusal to resume peace talks until terrorism was abandoned, although he was less specific on how Mr Arafat could prove to Israel that this side of the peace bargain had been kept.

Looking unruffled by the increasing tide of international condemnation of Israel's stance over building houses on occupied land, Mr Netanyahu said his respects to the mourning families of seven Israeli schoolgirls killed by a Jordanian soldier.

He dismissed suggestions by Palestinian leaders that one of the bombs might have been a suicide attempt and, referring to his earlier charge

that Arafat had threatened to end the peace process. He said that talks would not resume until the PLO had shown a new determination to deal with it.

Far from showing any signs of compromise, Mr Netanyahu appeared more confident of his position than during previous interviews. He appeared almost to relish Israel's international stance as a lone nation with many enemies, especially in the media, and likened sympathy for the Palestinians with that accorded to Cuba in its conflict with America 20 years ago.

Mr Netanyahu also ridiculed the suggestion that Israel might stop work at Har Homa as a condition for returning to the negotiating table. He accused the Palestinians of spreading false expectations among their people. "Jerusalem is the rock of our existence," he said. "If we were to halt housing projects in our own capital, we may as well shut down the country."

The second blast occurred a short while later outside the Jewish settlement of Kfar Darom, ripping off the door of a passing Arab taxi.

Witnesses said the bomber

was riding on a donkey cart

and blew himself up when he

was between a taxi and an

Israeli army Jeep. Five Palestians were wounded in the

blast, one seriously. Both

bombers were reportedly

wearing Palestinian police

uniforms.

The Ministry of Defence had no desire to pull the plug on British Forces television. It was responding to pressure from local stations, struggling in a market with just over half a million viewers, which had bought the rights to broadcast live British premiership football games.

Forces television was allowed to show football provided it was available only to the bases and those serving with the United Nations in Nicosia. However, at least 60,000 other viewers were able to tune in to the station that broadcasts many of the most popular programmes from Britain, including a mixture of BBC and ITN.

The station first responded to legal threats by ditching Premier League football three years ago. "It's a shame because the station was our prime PR asset here," Captain Tully said.

Captain Sean Tully, a spokesman for the British bases, said: "We're having a few technical difficulties but the signal will definitely be encrypted in Nicosia by April 11 and the rest of the island by the end of May."

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Soldiers check a taxi damaged in a blast outside Kfar Darom. Palestinians challenged Israeli claims that it was the work of a suicide bomber

Suicide bomber targets school bus

FROM ROSS DUNN IN JERUSALEM

THIRTY seconds may have saved the lives of a group of Israeli children from the first of two apparent suicide bombings in the Gaza Strip.

The children were on board a bus waiting to depart from the Jewish settlement of Netzarim when a huge explosion was heard outside the heavily guarded compound.

Israeli military officials believe the bomber detonated himself prematurely, out of fear of detection. Half a minute later and the explosion could have taken the lives of the schoolchildren.

One of the residents of Netzarim, Moshe Hoshen, said: "The school bus, which leaves every morning at 7 and is escorted by two [army] Jeeps ... was about to leave the settlement. And at 7 o'clock precisely we all heard a large explosion ... the bus driver received instructions to go back into the settlement." The bomber "probably wanted to jump at the bus", he said.

The second blast occurred a short while later outside the Jewish settlement of Kfar Darom, ripping off the door of a passing Arab taxi.

Witnesses said the bomber was riding on a donkey cart and blew himself up when he was between a taxi and an Israeli army Jeep. Five Palestians were wounded in the blast, one seriously. Both bombers were reportedly wearing Palestinian police uniforms.

But an aide to Yasser Arafat, President of the Palestinian Authority, said the Arab killed in the second blast had died from an explosive charge thrown at him from an Israeli army Jeep. "In Kfar Darom area, an Israeli military jeep hurled a grenade or a bomb at [Palestinian] passengers and a bomb at [Palestinian] passers-by, killing one and wounding others. This is information that we have collected from passers-by and victims," said Ahmed Abdel-Rahman, Secretary-General of the Palestinian Cabinet.

The last time that a co-ordinated suicide bombing attack occurred in the Gaza Strip, the Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility. But the organisation made no comment yesterday.

In a highly unusual development, another Islamic organisation, Hamas, which has also admitted responsibility for such attacks in the past denied any involvement in the bombings. The organisation said Israel was behind the attacks.

A Hamas official said: "This has nothing to do with the Islamic movement or Hamas. This bombing was done by Israeli intelligence and its [Palestinian] collaborators in an attempt to create an international problem between the Islamic movement and the



Kemal al-Zaro: killed in car at roadblock

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Tougher US immigration law prompts illegal residents to tie the knot

FROM DAVID ADAMS
IN MIAMI

THOUSANDS of illegal immigrants in the United States, fearing that new laws will make it harder for them to remain in the country, are trying to shoot down the system with Cupid's arrow.

The number of immigrants flooding into marriage licence bureaux is soaring. In Miami, marriage applications have almost doubled, from 6,742 in the first three months of last year to almost

11,400 so far this year. There were more than 5,000 last month. Cities with large migrant populations, such as New York and Houston, have reported similar increases.

"It's unbelievable," Roberto Rebozo, the head of the Marriage Licensing Bureau in Miami, said. "What's love got to do with it? Not a lot, he said. "Without a doubt it's got to do with the new law... and people trying to get married to maintain their residence in the United States."

Immigration experts said, how-

ever, that getting married would not help most illegal immigrants to dodge the new laws since marrying an American citizen only helped if the immigrant had legal status in the first place. The confusion, experts said, stemmed from new provisions aimed at tightening entry controls into the United States, and penalising people who overstayed.

Staff at one courthouse here said that they had noticed longer queues each morning earlier this year. They also noticed the odd couples

— young women paired with much older men. The staff said that last week a young woman had to help her dodging "groom" into the building. There are also cases where the women are old enough to be grandmothers of the men they are marrying. "We have marriages here where, when it comes to 'You may kiss the bride,' the husband will say 'No Thanks!'" Mr Rebozo said.

Standing in line to apply for a license at a Miami courthouse, Marco Pineda, a 44-year-old car

mechanic, confessed that his decision to marry was laced with a strong dose of pragmatism. Although he is a legal resident, of 16 years standing, his would-be bride, Carmen Montoya, 46, is not.

"The law is very confusing," said Ms Montoya, a house cleaner who came to the United States in 1983 from Guatemala. Her annual work permit expires in June and under the new laws she is not sure whether it would be renewed this time. "Marriage gives us a little extra hope," she said.

Fear has also spawned an illegal industry of marriage brokers who charge desperate clients \$5,000 (£3,145) or more to arrange matches. Carmen, a 45-year-old illegal immigrant from Peru, said she met her 66-year-old husband just before they married last week. She paid her husband \$2,500, plus \$300 to his sister for brokering the union. A second instalment, of at least \$2,500, will be due if and when she receives her residency papers. Under the arrangement he will move into her flat later this week.

an event she now dreads. Experts have issued warnings that the consequences of a fraudulent marriage are severe, and include deportation and a life-time ban on re-entering the country.

□ Washington: Six hours before the tough new immigration law was to go into effect, a federal judge granted a request to delay its implementation until Saturday. The judge ruled that the Administration had failed to give immigrants sufficient time to prepare for the sweeping changes. (Reuters)

Pakistan removes President's power to dismiss leaders

BY ZAHID HUSSAIN IN KARACHI, AND CHRISTOPHER THOMAS, SOUTH ASIA CORRESPONDENT

PAKISTAN'S parliament yesterday stripped the President of his power to dismiss elected governments and dissolve the National Assembly. A constitutional amendment Bill, unanimously passed by both houses of parliament, also clipped the President's prerogative to appoint military chiefs and provincial governors.

The decision, which restores the supremacy of parliament, is a turning point for Pakistan's struggling democracy. Until now one of the biggest obstacles to democracy has been the President's provision, under which four elected governments were dismissed since the end of martial law in 1985. The measure was introduced by General Zia ul-Haq, the late dictator, to ensure that he could dismiss any Prime Minister who became troublesome or too independent.

Nawaz Sharif, the Prime Minister, elected in February with an overwhelming parliamentary majority, introduced the constitutional amendments to scrap the provision after consulting his Cabinet. President Leghari, who used the powers to sack Benazir Bhutto's Government last November on the ground of corruption, supported removal of the measure.

"This is the greatest day for democracy," a visibly delighted Mr Sharif told supporters. He is now the most powerful Prime Minister since the end of martial law, with a two-thirds parliamentary majority.



Politicians of all parties hail this as the greatest day for democracy in Pakistan.

Bhutto, whose party was crushed in elections in February by Mr Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League, congratulated the Prime Minister "for his bold move". She said it was a day when politicians should forget their differences.

Removal of the provision comes after years of power struggles between Presidents and Prime Ministers. Politicians from all parties, describing it as a historic day for democracy, declared that governments would now be au-

thoritative to the people, not an appointed official. Khalid Anwar, the law adviser to the Prime Minister, said the legislation marked an end to the painful legacy of martial law and the start of an era belonging to the people.

The military, still a formidable force in Pakistani politics, will no longer have access to the simple expedient of using the President to dismiss governments it does not like.

The military was behind the dismissals of Miss Bhutto and Mr Sharif because it feared the country was being bankrupted by fraud and mismanagement.

Many of the new top soldiers in Pakistan are determined to distance the army from politics. The armed forces would almost certainly have been consulted before the constitutional amendment was put forward by Mr Sharif, and it is a sign of their more democratic approach that they evidently raised no objection.

Zia introduced the eighth amendment to the constitution under a bargain with politicians to end martial law. He used it to sack Mohammad Khan Junejo, his handpicked Prime Minister, in 1988. Soon afterwards Zia died, possibly murdered, in a mysterious aircraft crash.

The relic of martial law he left behind has prevented Pakistani democracy taking root, and commentators have described the change as a defining moment for the country as it approaches the fiftieth anniversary of its creation. The change also means the Prime Minister will have to approve the President's appointment of armed forces chiefs and provincial governors.

The army has ruled Pakistan for half its life, but direct military intervention has become almost inconceivable. The danger in scrapping the presidential power to sack leaders is that there is no longer any ultimate sanction, save for elections, to deal with governments that allow politicians to plunder the Exchequer, as Miss Bhutto allegedly did during her last tenure.

Protesters delay cult leader's burial

BY QUENTIN LETTS

THE FAMILY of Marshall Applewhite, leader of the suicidal San Diego "Heaven's Gate" cult, may face a hard time trying to find somewhere to bury him.

Applewhite, who inspired 38 followers to kill themselves in California last week, was expected to be buried next to his father in a cemetery in San Antonio, Texas, but the cult leader's sister, Louise Winant, said that she had been advised that could lead to trouble.

"There have been pickets around the cemetery," she said. "The protesters have said that his grave won't be safe."

Mrs Winant had long lost touch with her odd brother before he encouraged his disciples to drink poison last week in order to keep an engagement with a UFO which they believed to be flying in the tail of the Hale-Bopp comet.

In San Diego yesterday, police started to pack up and conclude their investigation into the mass suicide. After initial fears that other groups of Applewhite followers elsewhere might follow suit, detectives linked to the case sought now to play down such suggestions. After interviewing former members of the cult group, police felt that the San Diego household was the only group over which Applewhite held sufficient sway.

Police technicians have so far resisted investigating in depth the computers which were found at the scene of the deaths, for fear of wiping out possible evidence.

The San Diego County Medical Examiner's Office said that eight of the men found dead at the cult's house had been surgically castrated, but that was not the cause of death. Sexual self-denial was a part of Applewhite's creed. It is not yet known where the castrations took place, as in normal circumstances a surgeon would balk at conducting such an operation.

Police also have yet to work out how the cult managed to obtain sufficient quantities of the phenobarbital which killed the first 37 cult members. The last two people to kill themselves did so using plastic bags after taking large doses of an opiate.



Villagers south of Calcutta with the "travelling Aids show" sponsored by the EU

EU helps to fight Indian Aids

FROM MICHAEL DYNES IN CALCUTTA

DISTRIBUTING free condoms in an impoverished village in West Bengal is not one of the European Union's most glamorous aid projects.

However, with an estimated three million cases of Aids in India, the programme has an urgency unmatched by any other.

Here in the dingy back-streets of Diamond Harbour, a fishing village south of Calcutta, EU officials have been supplying brothels with condoms for more than a year and teaching the prostitutes how to use them. Although prostitution is illegal, the 5,000

inhabitants of Diamond Harbour support about 15 brothels, and an estimated 200 full-time and 100 part-time prostitutes.

It is impossible to gauge the effectiveness of the initiative, which has so far cost the European taxpayer about £40,000. However, the giggling admission by Dipa, 25, a mother of two, that she would happily forget about a condom for a higher fee, suggests that it is probably limited.

Working under false names and lying to their families about the source of their income, for a few short years these young women can earn

up to 5,000 rupees (£90) a month, for them a huge sum.

Sanjib Kumar, one of the officials responsible for the EU's safe sex campaign, says:

"We cannot tell them to stop selling their sex because we

cannot provide them with an alternative income."

Years after the developed world first sounded the alarm over the spread of Aids, the message is only just beginning to filter through to some rural communities. Rickshaw and bullock carts carry the message: "Avoid Aids — use a condom" to what appears to be a largely indifferent public.

Russians 'building nuclear shelters'

FROM IAN BRODIE
IN WASHINGTON

RUSSIA continues to build deep underground bunkers and tunnels so that Kremlin leaders can survive a nuclear attack and escape from Moscow, according to a leaked CIA report yesterday.

The costly projects include a secret underground railway line from Victory Park Station on the Moscow Metro to President Yeltsin's dacha, 13 miles from the Kremlin, the report said.

A bunker for Russian leaders was said to be nearly complete at Voronovo, 46 miles south of Moscow, and a second bunker at Sharapovo, 34 miles from the capital, was described as having an underground railway running to it. Four bunker complexes within Moscow to house government leaders during a nuclear strike were being built or renovated, the report said.

Construction was continuing on a "nuclear-survivable" command post at Kosvinsky mountain in the Urals, 850 miles east of Moscow, and satellite photographs of Yamanant mountain near the Urals town of Beloretsk showed digging at a deep underground complex.

The underground railway would allow the rapid evacuation of leaders from Moscow. They would then be flown to back-up headquarters at Yamanant or Kosvinsky. The report said: "The command post at Kosvinsky appears to provide the Russians with the means to retaliate against a nuclear attack."

All these details appeared in The Washington Times, which is a frequent conduit for CIA estimates of continued Cold War skulduggery by America's former adversaries.

A CIA spokesman refused to comment, but someone in Washington's national security establishment had a motive for drawing attention to the two-week-old report, said to be labelled "top secret".

Outlays for the huge construction programme were said to be raising concerns in Washington about whether American aid to Russia was allowing Moscow to spend money on new strategic forces and the bomb-proof hideaways. Disclosure of the bunker network comes less than two weeks after Mr Yeltsin and President Clinton agreed in Helsinki to extend the deadline for Russia's compliance with nuclear arms cuts because of costs.

It could be argued that one reason why Russian leaders see no reduction of the nuclear threat is Nato's insistence on expanding to accommodate Moscow's former Iron Curtain allies. America's contingency bunkers have been largely abandoned and one is now a tourist attraction.

Quebec law will let language police give shopkeepers a tongue-lashing

FROM QUENTIN LETTS
IN MONTREAL

MONTREAL's English-speaking shopkeepers are furious about new legislation in Quebec which will give the province's language "police" far-reaching search-and-enter powers to check that French is being used.

The powers were described by

any police powers currently in place in the Western world" and "worrying of Nazi Germany".

Supporters of the controversial Bill 40 argued that it simply defended Quebec's partly French culture by setting up a commission for the protection of the French language.

Bill 40, which is expected to pass into law this month, will allow Quebec government inspectors to

enter businesses "at any reasonable time" and "examine any products or documents, make copies and take photographs". No warrant will be required and the searches may be conducted at a suspect's home if it doubles as a business address.

If shopkeepers display signs which are in English only they are liable to fines. French-only signs are permitted. When signs are in both languages, the words in

French must be bigger. The Office de la Langue Francaise has the job of enforcing the province's much-disputed language laws designed to protect the use of French in the bilingual province. Anglophones

allege that the laws have led to "bullying" of English-speaking, and particularly ethnic minority, businesses.

The Office employs 217 people, with an annual budget estimated

by opponents at C\$30 million (£13.5 million).

David Black of the Quebec Committee for Canada, a group which opposes the francophone desire for Quebec independence, said: "In its two decades of operation, the OLF has managed to fine only 179 people, at about £63 each. Why do they need so many employees?"

Under Bill 40, provincial funds

and officials will be put at the use of anyone reporting abuses of the language laws. "The Commission shall provide assistance to complainants in drawing up their complaints," the Bill proposes.

In the past 30 years, when the French-speaking majority has exercised increasing muscle, more than 500,000 Quebecers emigrated, the highest population loss for a Canadian province.

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Cinema's invasion irritates Tuscans

BY RICHARD OWEN

RESIDENTS of Tuscany, far from being flattered by the use of Tuscan backdrops for films such as *The English Patient*, are becoming increasingly irritated by the invasion of their "earthly paradise" by "Anglo-Saxon filmmakers".

The English Patient, directed by Anthony Minghella and partly set in rural wartime Tuscany, is the latest in a long line of films which use the "Chiantishe" backdrop of cypresses, olive groves, terraced vineyards and terracotta villas. A special unit has been set up in Pisa to advise film-makers on which palazzo or piazza can be used.

La Repubblica said the trend had been started 12 years ago by the 1985 Merchant-Ivory production of E. M. Forster's *A Room With a View*, with its romantic shots of Florence and the surrounding countryside. However, it said that the vogue, which has coincided with the growing colonisation of Tuscany by British and other expatriates, was "getting out of hand".

Recent films which draw heavily on the rolling Tuscan landscape for their success include Bernardo Bertolucci's *Stealing Beauty*, Kenneth Branagh's version of *Much Ado About Nothing* and Jane Campion's film of *Portrait of a Lady* by Henry James.

Franco Zeffirelli is about to start shooting *Tea with Mussolini* near San Gimignano. Mel Gibson, meanwhile, is scouting for locations in and around Sienna for his next film.

Residents of Pienza, created by Pope Pius II in the 15th century, seem pleased with the image of their town in *The English Patient*. A spokesman for the town council said there had been "some differences" over "alterations" to the town's buildings for filming, but these disputes were "forgotten". Instead, the Pienza authorities are planning to convert the monastery of Sant' Anna in Camprena, in which Juliette Binoche tends to her dying patient, into a country hotel.



Binoche adding to the focus on Tuscany

Bosnian orphans forced to return home

Tears shed as Germany rounds up the first of 325,000 rejected refugees

FROM DEBORAH COLLCUTT IN BONN

THE return yesterday of a group of Bosnian orphans to their homeland signalled the official start of Germany's mass forced repatriation of hundreds of thousands of refugees. The 31 children, some as young as five, flew back to Sarajevo from Berlin after month-long delays during which the authorities and aid agencies argued about their future.

The children were granted a reprieve in October — a day before they were due to return to Sarajevo — after a German politician appealed for them to be spared a harsh winter in Bosnia and to allow time for the conditions of the Dayton peace accord to take full effect.

There were emotional scenes yesterday as the children were collected from orphanages around Magdeburg in eastern Germany, where they have lived since their dramatic evacuation from Sarajevo five years ago. Orphanage staff and teachers from the local school and kindergarten wept as the children were rounded up and put on a bus for Berlin airport and a mid-morning flight.

In the past three weeks the children have been missing from normal lessons. Instead they have been receiving intensive tuition in their mother tongue and spending hours with child psychiatrists, in an effort to prepare them for the return.

The children were saved from the intense fighting of Sarajevo in 1992 by two local politicians and brought to single people and childless

couples from April 1 and will be extended to include families with children at the beginning of next month.

— We will be just as humane in sending the refugees back as we were in taking them in, Herr Kinkel said.

This is about people who, in some cases, have lived in Germany for very many years

— we won't just mechanically send them back overnight, he added, contradicting media reports in Munich and Berlin that groups of refugees — including pregnant and elderly women — have been arrested and forced to board aircraft without any notice or time to pack their belongings.

The United Nations High

Commissioner for Refugees once again appealed to Bonn yesterday not to judge repatriation cases based on records collated in Germany but on the stability of the homeland region and the availability of accommodation there.

About a third of the Bosnian refugees living in Germany are Muslims who come from

regions under Serbian control. According to our information, hundreds of thousands of refugees from various states have to be housed in Bosnia this year, said a spokesman for the UN refugees agency. "Instead of the necessary 50,000 apartments, there are only about 13,000 standing."

Berbel Bohley, the Com-

missioner for Help for Bosnia, also issued a warning against introducing hasty repatriation programmes. "A disorganized deportation of the refugees would be a catastrophe," she said.

The net, which the refugees might be caught up in, is so thin that it will tear under the force of deportation."



Orphans hold on to their toys in Berlin yesterday as they await a flight home to Sarajevo. The children had lived in Germany for five years

Strikes hit French airline as Europe opens skies to rivals

FROM SUSAN BELL IN PARIS

BESIEGED by striking ground staff and pilots, Air France Europe barely managed to limp into the Continent's new "open skies" yesterday as the European Union deregulated its airspace to encourage competition.

The state-owned airline was forced to cancel most morning flights from Orly airport, Paris, as staff protested against its merger with Air France, leaving passengers temporarily stranded after the Easter holiday weekend. Only a few shuttles to Marseilles, Nice and Toulouse were operating normally.

Air travellers were also hampered yesterday by a one-day strike by staff at Aéroports de Paris, the city's airport authority. The strike against planned job cuts caused delays in baggage handling and blanketed-out flight information screens. Over the weekend air travel was also severely disrupted when most Air France Europe flights were cancelled because of a strike by ground staff.

Anne-Marie Idrac, the junior Transport Minister, said she was appalled by the strikes since it jeopardised the state airline's future as French airspace opened up to competition under the European "open skies" policy. France has the lion's share of Euro-

pean air travel, carrying more than 20 million passengers a year, although its airlines are plagued by labour disputes.

Yesterday's strike was the latest in a series of protests over plans to restructure the airline ahead of its merger with Air France. The industrial action was timed to coincide with a key step that Air France took yesterday towards the merger by leasing the domestic carrier's activities and staff. The merger is due to be completed in September.

Staff at Air France Europe, formerly Air Inter, are unhappy at proposals to bring their more generous pay and working conditions into line with those of their new parent company. Their unions cite a lack of negotiation as a key reason for the industrial action. The management of Air France maintains that the more lucrative terms need to be adjusted to match more closely with those of lower-cost competitors such as British Airways.

Air France plans to capitalise on the "open skies" ruling by introducing a domestic service in Britain, possibly in partnership with Jersey European. On May 5 the airline will challenge the German airline Lufthansa by launching a Frankfurt-to-Berlin service.

Boat tragedy splits Italy over protection force

FROM RICHARD OWEN
IN ROME

ITALY was deeply divided yesterday over its well advanced plans for military intervention in Albania, with opposition politicians and military commanders urging a last-minute delay in deployment of the Italian-led protection force.

Professor Romano Prodi, the Prime Minister, insisted it would go ahead as planned within the next two weeks "because Albania needs Italian help in its tragic crisis".

But *La Repubblica* gave a warning that what had started as a humanitarian mission welcomed by the Albanians had been transformed into a high-risk operation by the sinking of an Albanian refugee boat on Good Friday. The boat collided with an Italian corvette trying to stop "illegal immigration" to Italy.

Tirana claims that nearly 100 refugees, many of them women and children, were drowned. Angry Albanians — especially in Vlore, from where the boat set sail — blame Italy for the accident, and rebels have threatened to shoot any Italian troops who land at Albanian ports to escort humanitarian convoys.

Beniamino Andreatta, the Defence Minister, told the defence and foreign relations committees, meeting jointly in the Senate yesterday, that Albanian naval experts had



been asked to join an inquiry into the disaster. He said the corvette was moving along-side to order the Albanian boat to turn back when the vessel suddenly swung into the Italian ship's path, making collision inevitable. The boat had been stolen from Sarande two days earlier by criminals running an illegal immigration racket, he said.

Signor Andreatta later met Shaqir Vukaj, the Albanian Defence Minister, to discuss Friday's tragedy and plans for the intervention force to be drawn from Italy, Spain, Greece and other southern European nations. France yesterday confirmed it would contribute 1,000 troops to secure Durres and establish a "corridor" for supplies from the port to Tirana. Defence officials from the proposed force and the Western European Union meet in Rome today to complete plans.

But Admiral Guido Ventroni, Chief of the Defence Staff, said there was a risk that the "small amount of hope" which existed for getting aid to Albania under military protection had been compromised.

Attempts to reach cross-party unity over the crisis collapsed when Signor Prodi accused Silvio Berlusconi, the media tycoon and leader of the right-wing Opposition, of cynically exploiting the refugee tragedy. Signor Berlusconi went to Brindisi on Monday, tearfully embracing survivors of the sea tragedy on television.

□ Tirana: Bashkim Fino, the Albanian Prime Minister, went to the rebel-held South yesterday for the first time since insurgents seized the region and told their leaders that the Shik secret police had been disbanded. (Reuters)

Leading article, page 21

Camera catches killer policemen in Brazil

Rio de Janeiro: Nine Brazilian policemen have been arrested after being filmed by an amateur cameraman as they robbed and beat three men with batons and killed two of them with shots in the head from close range (Gabriella Garnett writes). The violent scenes were broadcast on national television here yesterday.

The policemen were filmed stopping cars at random near the shanty town of Diadema, on the outskirts of São Paulo. One victim was made to kneel before he was killed. The shots were fired by a military police cadet known as "Rambo".

Brazil's Justice Minister, Nelson Jobim, announced an inquiry into "human rights violations" and said: "These nine policemen will receive exemplary punishment."

140 die in Hutu rebellion

Bujumbura: At least 140 people have been killed in the past week in clashes between government troops and Hutu rebels in southern Burundi, an army spokesman said. Major Mameri Simarini said the army had sent a team to the province of Bururi to investigate. Later, Lieutenant Isaac Nibizi, the chief army spokesman, said on state television that aircraft had been sent to put down the violent clashes. Military officials said that Hutu rebels killed five people in the Kinkuma neighbourhood of Bujumbura late on Sunday. The victims were reported to be Hutus who had recently returned from refugee camps outside the city. (AP)

Bad drivers to be flogged

Abu Dhabi: Ras al-Khaimah, a small Gulf emirate, believes it has found the solution to its chronic problem of bad driving — public flogging or ten days in jail. "Violators of the traffic rules will be flogged in public at the mosque nearest to their houses," a local newspaper reported. Police said up to 50 lashes would be given to anyone deliberately violating traffic rules, driving badly, ignoring red lights or driving without a licence. "Some young men do not give a damn for traffic rules and our previous punishment of imposing fines has been futile," a police officer said. (AFP)

Escaped tiger spurns dinner

Ottawa: Raw chicken was spread over snow-covered fairways at a golf course yesterday to tempt Zarak, an escaped four-year-old Siberian tiger, who has been on the loose for two days in Barrie, Ontario. Police wanted to get a shot at him with tranquiliser darts, but Zarak stayed in hiding (Richard Cleroux writes). The 500kg tiger was being transferred, with his mother, from a wild animal sanctuary to the Bear Creek Exotics Park when he hopped a fence and fled to the safety of a thicket next to the nearby golf course.

Bomb destroys tsar's statue

Moscow: A bomb has destroyed the Russian capital's only monument to the country's last tsar, Nicholas II, right. The Federal Security Service said: "The explosion was carried out in a very professional way. Practically nothing is left of the monument." The 52ft bronze statue was erected in a remote spot in northeast Moscow last year, reflecting continued official uncertainty about the Royal Family, murdered by the Bolsheviks in 1918. (Reuters)



Beijing attacks Gingrich

Hong Kong: The statement by Newt Gingrich, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, that the United States would defend Taiwan if China tried to retake it by force, was condemned by Beijing yesterday as "interference" (Jonathan Mirsky writes). The Foreign Ministry said China preferred peaceful reunification, but would take "other measures" if Taiwan declared independence or foreign forces intervened.

Britons get dressing down

Rotterdam: Police resolved a "cultural misunderstanding" after about twenty young Britons stripped naked amid picknickers Dutch families on a riverside path. They "thought it would be acceptable to stroll around in their birthday suits," the police said. Local people objected, the police were called and the young people dressed hastily and left by taxi. (Reuters)

Disaster train 'was doing 85mph in 20mph zone'



Workers prepare to clear the tracks after a Barcelona to Málaga train was derailed yesterday, killing two people

SPANISH investigators yesterday were picking through the wreckage of two express passenger trains to discover the causes of two derailments that claimed at least 20 lives on Monday night.

Doctors working at the site of the worse of the two derailments, at Huarte Aragón in the northern province of Navarre, said that the high-speed accident had been so violent that it was impossible to determine whether they had extricated 18 or 19 bodies from the wreckage.

Javier Sevillano, for the state rail company Renfe, said that the train had been travelling at 85mph at a point where the speed limit was 20mph. The driver had survived the accident and was being questioned by the police. Police officers did not release the names of the dead yesterday, but said the youngest victim had been 13. Twelve of the 97 people injured were still in intensive care at hospitals in Pamplona, 20 miles from the crash. Another 30 people were being treated for lesser injuries. The

four-carriage inter-city train had been travelling from Barcelona to Irún on the French border and was packed with people returning from the Easter holiday.

The second accident happened early yesterday while most of the 54 passengers travelling from Barcelona to Málaga were asleep in couchettes.

Embassy officials in Madrid said that Renfe had reported that no British people had been travelling in either train. Rafael Arias Salgado, the Development Minister, ruled out terrorist sabotage as a possible cause of either accident.

Bless their little cotton socks

Frill-seekers will indulge their whims even if you ban Barbie

Perhaps it takes the moral zeal and ponderous discipline of the reformed heroin addict, but I, without such advantages, have given in to the inevitable. I am talking about Courtney Love's decision, which I read about in this month's *Vogue*, to ban Barbie dolls, frilly socks and topknots from her four-year-old daughter.

Every inch of burning rhetoric of my Millet-inspired militiam youth, every centimetre of reasoned, more assimilist feminist argument since, is as nothing. For I have a daughter, a year younger than Courtney Love's, whose cooing embrace of all things girly is undeniable. Ban Barbie dolls, frilly socks or topknots? I wouldn't dare.

I'm not sure that I would

is a certain vicarious thrill in all that unashamed girliness, the ribbons, the hairbands, the pink dresses, that prettiness. Even if it doesn't offend us politically (in the feminist sense), it cannot but assault our aesthetic sensibility. I mean, have you seen the Polly Pocket trainers? Purple-and-pink-trim dolly — or should I say Polly? — enclosed in its own little heart-shaped capsule on the side. Hideous. But the lure is definitely still there. And it is the stronger for the fact that many women of my generation have resisted it, or, more to the point, repressed it.

It is as if we are letting our daughters express all that forbidden saccharine femininity for us, perhaps even willing them to. (Not that I have ever quite eschewed the business of the feminine myself, nor felt obliged to do so.) In theory, I am opposed to Barbie and all her pomps. But the truth is that I long for my daughter to move into that phase. Hypocrite that I am, as I walked through the toy floor of a department store the other day, I began to rail weakly against the racks upon racks of minuscule cutouts and the hair-swirling dolls for which they were designed. It wasn't until we reached the end of the display that I owned up, even to my surprise, that I was just itching to get my fingers on them. I can't wait.

Times have changed since the 1970s, when women thought that the way to equality was by aping men: far from seeming a feminist perspective, that now appears to be essentially misogynistic.

There is no shame attached to the female, the feminine. And yet, I think we should be wary of opposite, too.

The intervention of Sir Edward Heath was, however, a true reminder of the image politicians project. Ted is the unacceptable face of Conservatism in all its liver-spattered, overfed and undersexed glory. Even if he now represents little else, he does at least signify how distant the worlds of politics and glamour appear to most voters.

That impression is, of

course only reinforced by the parade of suits at press conferences and the lame attempts by Mantovani men to appropriate Lightning Seeds lyrics

They're spin-doctors with sex appeal.

Michael Gove
on the election
bratpack

or Spice Girls hook lines. And yet, behind the scenes are graduates of Generation X, who know their Pulp albums from their *Pulp Fiction*.

There are switched-on spin doctors of both sexes, but while the boys are happy to preen, the glamour girls hate to be thought of as such. The women of new Labour, in particular, loathe to be seen making their generation or gender an issue — but they needn't worry, their party has

already done that for them. The women-only shortlists which the NEC can still impose, and the guaranteed seats on the NEC itself, create a women's refuge from all-out electoral competition. Within the support structure, however, new Labour entirely lives up to its meritocratic rhetoric. With no room for failure, there is no space for second-best.

The ascendancy of Margaret McDonagh, general elections co-ordinator, in Millbank Tower attests to that. Although she would balk at the suggestion that she was anything other than a political mechanic, her icy air of command has won her admirers among her juniors. "She appeals to the socialist need to be bossed," explained one cynic.

Labour's glamour boys are

overshadowed by the brooding presence of Alastair Campbell, the leader's press secretary. Millbank moles have noted that he wanders round with shirt buttons undone, gigolo-style. The Tom Jones turn has few emulators, partly because the key new Labour garment is a waistcoat cut so high it can resemble your granny's cardigan, but also because overt displays of

masculinity are neither Nine-

ties or new Labour. Laddishness is, however, *de rigueur* at Tory Central Office, where breeding, in both senses, matters. While the boys tend to be *Loaded* meets P.G. Wodehouse, the girls are all real Wooster women. The most accomplished Conservative coquettresses, such as Catherine Fall and Rachel Whistone, all come from

thoroughbred stables like Cobham and Roedean.

The real home, however, of youthful glamour in politics is the Referendum Party, where Jimmy Goldsmith's personal PR Patrick Robertson presides over a harem of girls in Gucci. It's a pity for politics that the polls suggest the party party will, like the labels its activists wear, be taken to the cleaners very shortly ...

The glamour girls and boys

Nigella Lawson

want to. First, I don't think that sort of policing can ever work. I work on the principle that if one doesn't make an issue out of more or less anything — dolls, dresses, sweets, whatever — it will never become one. Secondly, I have had to accept that many of the characteristics I used to believe were the result of a sexist society were prompted by nature.

When my daughter was born, I never expected that before she was a year old she would be yearning for a "baby" (a doll in the guise of same) and a little buggy to push it around. And this enthusiasm seems to be universal among female infants, if my friends' daughters are anything to go by. For they all seem to go through the same stages: next come, with a passion worthy of Dame Barbara Cartland, the pink phase, then the refusal to wear anything but dresses, and then the obsession with weddings.

At first I took the line that such behaviour was innate: the feminine really does express itself thus, I concluded. But I began to notice something else, too. Mothers who mouth silent apologies or shrug their shoulders in periodic tedium when their daughters move into Barbie-mania have one thing in common. We have all at some time disclaimed that particular kind of girliness. And I can't help thinking that as we condemn those infantile displays of 1950s womanhood, decorative and super-domestic, so we take an illicit pleasure in them. I think there

LEADERS OF THE PACK

MARGARET McDONAGH

Labour's election co-ordinator, age 36

A mother figure for Blair's boys? Only if your mum's Ma Baker. She's the she-wolf who suckles the rowellers of the rapid rebuttal unit and slaps down dissenters.

Is this woman's place in the House? Possibly, but her sister Siobhan is a better bet. Margaret is more likely to wield influence from outside.

Nurturing talent? And suffocating it. Her job after victory would be keeping the party in line with the leadership: toeing the line will be more important than talent.

PATRICK ROBERTSON

Personal PR for Sir James Goldsmith, age 28

A true Brit — just like Jimmy! Patrick's Latin looks owe something to a Roman childhood and a little to duty-free grooming products, but his parents are Scots.

Does that make him more dour devil than daredevil? Not at all. In Annabel's more often than the owner, Patrick is such an accomplished socialite people now ask Goldsmith to introduce them to Patrick.

So not a serious figure? Quite the opposite. Few are closer to Jimmy than Patrick.

CATHERINE FALL

European Policy Officer, Tory Central Office, age 28

Another little Englander? Hardly. She was educated in Moscow, has worked in Strasbourg and has a half-Italian boyfriend.

How can she cope with Central Office? Admirably: a diplomat, she learnt early how to deal with difficult customers.

Although Euro-moderate, she counts sceptics as friends.

Are all her friends politicos? Emphatically not.

As likely to be dining with Howard Davies from the Bank of England as a grande dame of ballet.

Time was when the clocks went forward, you just put your clock forward. Not any longer. Now that microchip technology has made it possible very cheaply, anything that can take a clock has one.

In our house we had to move 23 clocks forward: one on the oven, one on the microwave, the ones on two televisions, two video recorders, three remote controls, two computers, one fax machine, three telephones, an answerphone, two burglar alarm keypads, one stereo, two alarm clocks and two watches.

HOW TO TELL THEM APART

New Labour:

Drink: Sea Breeze/Hoegaarden beer.

Bar: Oxo Tower, Soho House.

Men's suit: Agnes B. single-breasted.

Women's dress: Jigsaw suit, square-toed shoes.

Men's haircut: French crop, off the brow.

Women's haircut: Power bob.

Most likely to say: "Why don't you bring your partner?"

Least likely to say: "You know what I hate about Tony?"

Young Tory:

Drink: Bloody Mary/Guinness.

Bar: Young's pubs, Chelsea wine bars.

Men's suit: Pinstripe from Hackett.

Women's dress: Cashmere and snaffled flannels.

Men's haircut: Eton fringe, flopping.

Women's haircut: Lacrosse-pitch length and Alice band.

Most likely to say: "What's the talent like?"

Least likely to say: "You know what I admire about Brian?"

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Barclays	12.3%	£146.80	25.504	£146.80	£5,504.64	£2,624.44
NatWest	12.3%	£122.78	25.413	£122.78	£5,413.44	£2,532.22

Leader	A 14.9% APR	Typical Example	APR	48 Monthly Payments	Total Amount Paid	Direct Loan Saving
RB Direct	14.9%	£186.86	26.059	£186.86	£9,333.12	£4,715.88
TSB	14.9%	£207.40	26.475	£207.40	£9,475.20	£4,737.98
Barclays	14.9%	£194.21	26.324	£194.21	£9,324.96	£4,685.74
NatWest	14.9%	£194.21	26.324	£194.21	£9,324.96	£4,685.74

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Alan Coren



■ And in the gardens of Arcadia my ego was supplanted

Was it or was it not an exemplary Easter Monday? Was I or was I not intoxicated, high up on Hertfordshire's sunlit hummocks Ridgeway, by the palpably thrumming regeneration all about me, things spiritual and natural mystically intertwined as they were seasonally meant to be, God's Son in His heaven, and bees, birds and buds new-risen wherever I looked? With, at my feet, a thousand different flowers.

All for sale. Which was why I was there, traipsing the gravelled aisles of an enormous garden centre, keenly peering this way and that, my mudstained garden plan clutched in a blistered hand still smarting from the energetic preparation of the beds waiting back in Cricklewood, dug, turned, mulched, watered, and crying out, now, to be filled with stuff. What kind of stuff? All kinds. Nice tall coloured stuff at the back, nice middle-sized scented stuff in the centre, nice titchy edging stuff at the front, you know the type of thing, you've all done jigsaw.

But have you all done herbaceous borders? I had, until last weekend, not, and they turned out to be trickier than jigsaws; you haven't got a lid to guide you. True, I did have the mudstained plan, but mine is not a household name where horticulturalists congregate, and the mudstained plan just had these rough oblongs of pencilled bed on it blotted out in coloured ink to indicate the different hues of all the stuff I thought I was after, most of which, unfortunately, had now mudstained together to give the impression that what I wished to create was a paradise of herbaceous khaki. Never mind, I had it more or less in my head. The problem was that I didn't have it more or less at my feet. I didn't have it at all at my feet, because when I said, a moment ago that there were a thousand different flowers down there, what I should have said was that there were a thousand different things that would be flowers once they had come out. At the moment, what I had at my feet looked like a thousand little lettuces.

And then Roger appeared. I knew he was Roger, because there was a tag on his green dungarees. Roger wanted to know if he could help me. I replied joyfully that nobody could help me more, and I put him in the picture, inssofar as pointing at an arrangement of shapeless khaki blobs may be said to constitute that, and Roger said: "Why not begin with a background of *Hilarius mucus*?"

Or something like that. Whatever it was, I knew at once that we were in serious trouble, because when I asked him what *Hilarius mucus* looked like, he asked me if I was familiar with, as I recall, either *Copius gingivitis* or *Catelloni histeria*. I told him I wasn't, and he looked a bit shaken, but tried to describe it, so I asked if it came in yellow, and it didn't, but *Polyfilla hernia* did, he said, and would go very well with what he suggested I planted in front of it, which might have been *Dubius harmonium*, or then again might not. Either way, the ideal plant to complement it as a dwarf edger would be *Insidius virus*.

Now, I shouldn't have cared as much about any of this, felt half as dumb, grinned nearly as sheepishly, had I not been rather good at Latin. If, for example, Roger had wanted to know whether Caesar was about to march his forces expeditiously to new winter quarters on this side of the river and on that, I should have rattled off the answer instantly, and even, perhaps, gone on to sing of arms and the man who first from the shores of Troy came destined to an Italian exile; but he didn't. The Latin I had been rather good at was not at all here. I had been taught the wrong Latin. They should have made me study Caesar's *Gallic Rockery* and Virgil's *Herbaceous*.

I went home not long afterwards, with a lot of little lettuces in the boot of the car to stick in where Roger advised they should be stuck. God knows what'll come up, but that is not the point of this piece. I have written this piece because what we do know is coming up is an election, and since education is a core subject of it, I want to make a plea for Latin to be a core subject of that. Show me a candidate who stands for Latin, and I shall show him a vote. A dead language? Not if you want live plants, it isn't.

You said it

OLYMPIAN political figure she may be, but Baroness Thatcher is not averse to a spot of plagiarism to boost her cause. Yesterday, in *The Daily Telegraph*, she wrote of the "boneless wonder" of new Labour, asserting that parallels between her achievements and those of Tony Blair are false.

The phrase "boneless wonder" was used by Winston Churchill in the House of Commons in 1931 to

put Labour's Ramsay MacDonald in his place, yet the baroness made no acknowledgement of the debt in her pot-stirring piece.

"I remember, when I was a child, being taken to the celebrated Barnum's Circus, which contained an exhibition of freaks and monstrosities, but the exhibit... which I most desired to see was the one described as 'The Boneless Wonder,'" said Churchill.

"My parents judged that that spectacle would be too revolting and demoralising for my youthful eyes, and I have waited 50 years to see the boneless wonder sitting on the Treasury Bench."

In familiar company, Baroness Thatcher, who has just donated her papers to Churchill College to be shelved alongside Sir Winston's, regularly refers to "Winston" as though speaking of a friend, even though she is not known to have met him. Yesterday, her office applauded her use of the "boneless wonder" description. "Oh Lord no, she never claimed it as her own," said one of her staff. "A good expression sticks. Why not use it again?"

• The comet Hale-Bopp has made the eyebrow-raising astronomer



Lending the mot juste



An old Tory fairy-tale

Peter Stothard reflects on Ramsay

MacDonald, Tony Blair and Home Rule for the Isle of Wight

Overheard outside the British Museum on Easter Saturday: First Woman: "I don't mind Tony Blair but this devolution business is ridiculous. Do you remember that book we used to have at home, the one about the smoothie new Labour Prime Minister who wanted independence for Scotland and got kidnapped by suffragettes trying to stop a revolution on the Isle of Wight?"

Second Woman: "I've no idea what you're talking about. Eat your lunch."

Norman Davey's *Yesterday* is not a famous book — no more so now than in the year it was published, 1924, during Ramsay MacDonald's first and short-lived Labour Government. But a quick search in the bookshops of Bloomsbury confirmed that my fellow museum visitor had remembered it well. Yesterday's hero is "indeed a smooth-mannered, former public schoolboy, Charles Debenham, "the premier of England and leader of the Radical Administration". Its subject is the effect on Britain of a left-wing government promising devolution. The parallels between the two Labour leaders are not exact — but neither are they exactly inexact.

We first meet Mr Debenham soon after his election victory when, already tired from the efforts of implementing his manifesto, he is taking a quiet holiday cruise on board the First Lord of the Admiralty's yacht. After lobster mayonnaise, cold chicken in aspic, iced watermelon and champagne cup, his host warns him of the risks of prime ministerial absence.

"Yes, but then nothing can happen. Nothing ever does happen in this bright little country. The administration is run entirely by Under Secretaries and heads of Departments. If you and I and the Cabinet were to go off, puff, like smoke tomorrow, the country would go on just the same. Oh this is better than Downing Street. No deputations, no by-elections, no reporters and, thank God, no suffragettes."

Meanwhile on the Isle of Wight, a leading article in the *Ryde Herald* has a more radical message than the radical Prime Minister ever had in mind.

"Ireland has obtained National Independence; Ulster has obtained National Independence; the time has come to achieve the same for the Isle of Wight. *Vexit nuncquam vincetur!* God Save The Liberator."

The rebels are confident. "England will simply puff and snort for a few weeks and then give in. What else can she do, with a Radical Government pledged to Devolution?"

The Left is elated. Home Rule will do more to implement the new government's programme than could ever be expected from the public schoolboy holiday-maker with a green chartreuse in one hand and a lobster claw in the other. As one demonstrator puts it:

"The first thing we've got to see passed is a Minimum Wage Bill. No employment under thirty bob a week. That's what I say. Hear, hear, cried one or two others."

Back in Downing Street the Cabinet is growing restless.

"Morning, Neville. Is the Prime Minister back?"

"No, sir."

"I'm a bit early. I'll wait. Ah, there's Punch."

Lord Thrale picked up the paper, studying with some care a full-page caricature of himself as keeper of a winking Affairs. He was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

"I believe the Prime Minister's a hallucination. I don't believe there ever was a Prime Minister. It was merely a term we used, a symbol we employed to designate the pivot around which our policy revolved, an illusion that is now shattered."

"How's the Exchequer?" asked the President of the Board of Trade. "Oh, it's somehow, sort of alive," said a tall man with a hatcher face, "despite the opposition in the Isle of Wight where they've ducked the Income Tax Collector, expelled the Insurance Act officials and publicly rejected the Hated Act. Why can't anyone get hold of Debenham?"

Reaction in Scotland, home to a large number of Debenham's Cabinet, is divided.

A small party looked favourably upon the Isle of Wight's independence as being a precedent that Scotland should adopt; but by far the majority of Scotsmen were of the opinion that it was much more advantageous to govern England as well as Scotland, as they did then, than to govern Scotland alone, as they would on secession.



London positively seethes with the Isle of Wight question.

The Evening News devoted a whole page to a long and stirring battle poem by John Masefield, entitled *Blood!* The Times came out with a leader entitled "Devolution and Democracy" — the product of an under-study, an Oxford Dictionary and half a bottle of port, a masterpiece in the art of discussing the incredible in a manner such as would lead the reader to believe that such was a master of every day occurrence.

In Wales and Cornwall and the Isle of Wight the spirit of devolution is spreading fast.

Trovo was afame; Bodinia was afame... The disintegration of the British Empire was yet further increased by the coalition of the Channel Islands — Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney and Sark — into the Independent Federation of the Southern Isles.

As the author comments:

The English, while peculiarly slow at adopting a new idea, yet, when once that idea is firmly rooted in their intelligence,

waste little time in carrying it out to its logical and ultimate conclusion.

Charles Debenham has been delayed at sea by the novel's sub-plot, in which the Prime Minister is kidnapped by militant suffragettes, the far Left of his day. This section involves the Radical hero escaping in washerwoman's clothes like a cross between Bonnie Prince Charlie and Mr Toad. Perhaps that is why my fellow visitors to the British Museum remembered it so well.

Once Debenham is back home in Downing Street, the electoral arithmetic looks grim.

He cursed an evil fate that had precipitated him into such a hornet's nest. Beside the full-blown crisis in the Isle of Wight there were four miniature crises awaiting disengagement. And the process of entanglement meant, as the Prime Minister admitted pathetically, loss of votes.

He is even forced to offer the Isle of Wight revolutionary leader the job of Minister for Education. Only a timely plot-twist provided by a German spy saves the nation and the day.

The beauty of Davey's novel is not just its peculiar echoes for a Labour Britain 75 years on; it is in the serendipitous way the plot unfolds. The mainspring of the action is not a massive desire by the people of the Isle of Wight for independence. The inflammatory editorial in the *Ryde Herald* is a joke played on a drunken editor by a visiting Fleet Street columnist. The island's liberator is a friend of the columnist who needs an excuse to kidnap an unenthused girlfriend. The rush to Home Rule is driven by the fear of one island town that the other will declare itself the capital first. Devolution in the air, through devious twists and happenstances, inexorably leads to depositions on the ground.

"How happy is the Opposition", continued Debenham. "I often remember the time when I was out of office. How unencumbered we were! How witty, how resourceful, how irresponsible! If they'd only give the leader of the Opposition five thousand a year, who would be Prime Minister?"

By the time that *Yesterday* appeared, published by Chapman & Hall at 7/6 net, the first Ramsay MacDonald administration was almost over. Norman Davey subtitled his book *A Tory Fairy Tale*.

The author is the Editor of The Times.

The killing fields are red again
Cambodia's culture of impunity, by
William Shawcross

The grenade attack on Cambodia's leading opposition party on Easter Sunday, which killed up to 19 people and left more than 100 wounded, is a catastrophe. It threatens to undo the UN peacekeeping process of 1991-93, once believed to be the most successful that the world has ever mounted.

Initial evidence suggests that the attack was approved at a high level in the coalition Government which the UN created. In the past two years, dozens of journalists and political leaders critical of the Government have been threatened, attacked or even killed. None of those responsible has been arrested, let alone punished. Yet at the same time, the Government has given pardons, with no questions asked, to leading figures in the decaying Khmer Rouge movement, which exterminated perhaps as many as two million people at the end of the 1970s. The message is that even the grossest human rights violations do not matter. A culture of impunity — in which those who murder on government orders go free, and everyone else is in fear — has been allowed to develop.

This attack was particularly brutal. About 160 people had gathered, legally and peacefully, to walk from the offices of the Khmer Nation Party, Cambodia's leading opposition party, to the National Assembly, to protest over the lack of rule of law in Cambodia. Usually police and soldiers mingle with and harass such a demonstration. On this occasion, a squad of well-armed soldiers stayed about 200 yards away, evidently ordered to keep a safe distance. Close to the National Assembly building, Sam Rainsy, a former minister of finance who is now the leader of the Khmer Nation Party, addressed the crowd. At about 8.20am two grenades exploded close to him. His life was saved only because one of his bodyguards jumped on him and forced him to the ground. The bodyguard was killed.

Then two more grenades exploded at the back of the crowd, killing people trying to flee. Two men in civilian clothes, probably grenade-throwers, were seen running towards the group of soldiers, who allowed them to pass. A demonstrator who tried to chase them was stopped by the soldiers. In other words, the soldiers seem to have helped the murderers.

Dozens of policemen then cordoned off the area, but they did nothing to help the wounded. People were left in agony in the broiling sun on the street. According to Amnesty International, one woman whose legs had been blown off was eventually picked up by the police and thrown into the back of an open pickup truck, which was then driven off without securing the victim, who was almost thrown off the back. She was declared dead on arrival at one of Phnom Penh's hospitals. There are still scores of mutilated people in the hospitals; they are in torment because scarcely any of them have enough money for painkillers. Voluntary agencies are appealing for money and drugs to help them.

National elections are due next year, five years after the UN elections. Those were won by the royalist party, led by Prince Norodom Ranariddh, but the ruling former Communists under Hun Sen threatened a civil war if the UN tried to make them leave office. The UN was forced to accept a coalition with two prime ministers: Prince Ranariddh and Hun Sen. Of the two, Hun Sen, a former Khmer Rouge soldier whom the Vietnamese installed in power as leader of a Communist government in the 1980s, is the dominant personality. His behaviour is increasingly psychotic, threatening all who oppose him. He is one of the main targets of Sam Rainsy's public criticism of the "mafia state" in Cambodia. Rainsy's life is constantly threatened.

In the past 12 months the two Prime Ministers have competed to encourage Khmer Rouge defectors. They want the former soldiers on their side in case political rivalry once more becomes civil war. Men such as Ieng Sary, the former Khmer Rouge foreign minister, have been given pardons, passports and money to defect to the Government side. No investigations of their crimes against humanity have taken place.

As a result of this culture of impunity, human rights violators are exempt from punishment. Some of those who helped the wounded in the grenade attack are said to be terrified that they will be punished for doing so.

The world is no longer watching. The British Government was effective in the 1993 election process, with a strong Ambassador, David Trimble. Since then it has sat on the sidelines. So, more importantly, has the Clinton Administration, which has tragically ignored warnings from Amnesty and others.

Cambodia now needs the UN Security Council and other institutions such as the UN Human Rights Commission to turn their attention once more to the country. The international donors who supply almost half the national budget have both the responsibility and the means to put pressure on the Government. Cambodia is now a signatory of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and by chance is being discussed this week by the Human Rights Commission in Geneva. A strong resolution is called for.

No one expected Cambodia to be transformed overnight into a model democracy. But Hun Sen clearly believes that his men can without fear attack all who oppose him. He must be told it is not so. Otherwise the mentality of the killing fields will return.

The author has written extensively on modern Cambodia.



building has been chosen on Rodeo Drive, for the display of "traditional British craftsmanship created for field sports". There are no plans, as yet, to sell baseball caps in their Mayfair headquarters.

Brook's crocks

THE TIRED remains of Lord Brook's car collection are being auctioned off at London's Olympia this afternoon. Brook's will be following the sale from — aptly enough — Ford prison, after his conviction for insurance fraud, over his sports car.

The sale, conducted by Brooks Auctioneers, will include two 1956

Maseratis, a 1967 Ferrari, and a dilapidated 1964 Oscar — optimistically described in the catalogue as "ripe for completion". Together with spare parts, ranging from five-speed gearboxes to twin-choke carburetors, the collection is expected to raise £100,000.

Ruddy man

JOHN MAJORS literary tastes have moved on from Trollope. He has expressed a weakness for Rudyard Kipling and recently told Leeds University students that *The Ballad of East and West* (1899) is his favourite poem.

Although it fails to mention soap boxes, the poem does concern a one-to-one face-down between a colonel's son and a bandit chief:

But there is neither East nor West,
border, nor breed, nor birth.
When two strong men stand face to face,
though they come from the ends of the earth.

Among those she encountered

flailing about on the castle in the Roundhouse, Camden, was Nicholas Kenyon, the Controller of BBC Radio 3. "They talked very animatedly," says a Roundhouse bouncer. "The castle seems to inspire great familiarity."

Yesterday, sadly, neither ballerina nor Kenyon was available to elaborate.

P.H.S



Going Dutch

THE CREAK of old brogues and the rustle of Barbour jackets are soon to be heard in sultry Beverley Hills alongside the clatter of ageing models with facelifts.

Holland & Holland, purveyors of shotguns and country accessories to the



BLAIR'S BAIT

Follow me over to Labour, says the ex-Tory MP

One testament to John Major's "classless society" is the number of middle and upper-class people who currently intend to vote Labour on May 1. This may not have been the social fluidity that the Prime Minister had in mind when he set out one of his early visions for Britain: but, despite all the caveats that sociologists can find, class-based politics does seem at last to be dissolving.

Yesterday Tony Blair seemed to relish the symbolism of sharing a platform with Alan Howarth, the Conservative defector whom he has charged with encouraging and reassuring those of his background who are now considering their own jump from Tory to Labour. It is unclear so far how successful this tactic will be: Tories intending to vote Labour will not necessarily be swayed by the example of so blatant a turncoat. But, even if Mr Howarth has no impact, the scale of those switching to Labour is already clear.

Voters who deserted one of the main parties used to go as far as the Liberals and no further. Now, however, voters are moving straight across in droves. In the Wirral South by-election, it was the most significant factor. No longer is it shocking for people who have voted Tory all their lives to say that they intend to give Labour a chance.

The swing from Conservative to Labour since the last general election is greater among the so-called "ABs" — those in managerial and professional occupations — than among the rest of the electorate, according to our latest MORI poll. In April 1992 the ABs favoured the Tories over Labour by 53 to 25 per cent; now they prefer Labour by 39 to 36 per cent.

Class-based politics have been in a gradual decline since the 1960s. The last time it was fashionable for the chattering classes to vote Labour was in 1966. But switches in the other direction were commonplace in the 1980s. It was one of Margaret Thatcher's great achievements

that she persuaded so many working-class and lower middle-class voters to support her. With the aid of policies such as council-house sales, she embodied their aspirations and helped to make them more prosperous than their parents. Now Mr Blair is trying to achieve the same for Labour: reaching out beyond traditional class support to lead a party, as he said yesterday, "behind which people from all walks of life, all classes, all parts of Britain can unite".

The fact that Baroness Thatcher and Mr Major came from relatively modest backgrounds helped to dispel the notion that the Tory party was only for the privileged. Mr Blair, set to be the first public-school educated Prime Minister from either party since Alec Douglas-Hamilton, offers the same reassurance in reverse. If he, and indeed Mr Howarth, can feel comfortable in the new Labour Party, it is perhaps safe for others of their background to support.

Of course, policies are as important as people. Had Mr Blair acceded to Gordon Brown's desire to raise the top rate of income tax, he would have been sending the wrong signal to those whom Mr Howarth has been tasked to woo. Had he allowed his Shadow Education Secretary, David Blunkett, to levy VAT on private school fees, or kept John Smith's plan to lift National Insurance thresholds, then wealthier voters would have supported Labour only against their own clearest interests.

If Labour's conversion into a party for all the nation is genuine, it should be welcomed. Voters of all backgrounds should now be able to exercise genuine choice at elections, without the expectation that one half of society will be pitted against the other while each party is in power. The change will also accord with public desires. As long ago as 1970, Labour's private polls found that voters wanted a party that represented all classes. The message was so unwelcome that it was ignored.

RETHINK FOR ROME

The Albanian expedition should be stopped before it starts

Italy's proposal for military intervention in Albania has all the makings of a disaster. The international force now being hastily assembled with the lukewarm blessing of the United Nations appears to have learnt nothing from the last European attempt to enforce peace in the Balkans. As in Bosnia, there is no clear mandate, no chain of command or division of duties, no properly defined military task and no exit strategy.

Unlike Bosnia, there is not even the pretext of international aggression: the force is wading into the Albanian imbroglio to confront not a political challenge or civil war but thieves, gangsters and opportunists.

Italy insists that its proposal to send in troops to guard the aid convoys is a humanitarian response to the calls for help from Tirana. Rome's truer motive is national self-interest. Having sheltered the first wave of refugees, Italy is now terrified at the prospect of an uncontrollable flood of destitute and ill-educated Albanians spreading across the country bringing new organised crime links in their wake.

The refugees, many admitting they are fleeing poverty rather than persecution, are now being sent home, with the Italian navy patrolling the straits to turn back the rusting wrecks in which thousands of desperate people are attempting to flee. As Lamberto Dini, the Foreign Minister, repeatedly insists, they will continue to stream out until conditions improve.

Some Italians are beginning to have second thoughts as the enormity of the undertaking becomes clear. The country has little experience and a mixed record in military operations. The last intervention in Albania, ordered by Mussolini on Good Friday, 1939, presaged a disastrous war, and memories of wartime ineptitude are still

deep. A more recent attempt to restore order in Somalia, another former colony, ended in catastrophe.

The Italian military has not decided the rules of engagement or the chain of command, and is already suggesting that conditions in Albania are too risky. Public support is volatile, the opposition is preparing to exploit the Government's unease and the Defence Minister's low profile hardly inspires confidence on the eve of today's meeting in Rome of allies in the force.

Italy is also chagrined that support for intervention has come only from "the olive belt" — those countries either directly affected by the crisis, such as Greece, those with historic ties such as Turkey and countries such as Romania keen to demonstrate its peace-keeping potential to Nato. Nato's immediate rejection of any military role and the refusal by the main troop-suppliers in Bosnia, Britain in particular, to take part has left many Italians uneasy. Their anxiety will be only partly relieved by the offer of 1,000 French troops.

What makes the entire operation problematic is that the mood in Albania itself has suddenly changed. The fatal collision of a refugee ship with an Italian naval vessel has provoked an outburst of hostility against a country that Albanians, in their naivety, believed would rescue them from their lawlessness and foolhardy pyramid investments. Even the aid agencies now see troop escorts as a liability likely to make the convoys a target for bandits. Italy should reconsider. The operation can still be halted without losing face the recent decision to call off the Canadian-led expedition to Zaire was a sensible response to changed circumstances. Things have already changed in Albania. Rome should change too.

ARCHERS ON TARGET

Grundy awakens the underdog instinct in us all

Anyone who was even half awake when an item about the battle between Eddie Grundy and Simon Pemberton began on the *Today* programme yesterday will have been startled into full attention by Anna Ford's description of Pemberton as "a bit of a shit". But the number of listeners blinking at her choice of words will have been far outweighed by those nodding in broad agreement. The most remarkable thing about the nation's latest obsession is not that Grundy and Pemberton are fictitious: it is that so many are on the side of Grundy.

Pemberton owns the land on which, in Radio 4's *The Archers*, Grundy farms. Pemberton is well-spoken and rich: Grundy sounds like Walter Gabriel reincarnated. Grundy has pulled himself together of late but for years he shuffled from disaster to catastrophe, at the head of a dysfunctional family. He has been to farming what another Eddie, Edwards, became to down-hill skiing, a compelling failure. To that extent he is the underdog in us all; but in the era of Douglas Hogg, BSE, cloned sheep, organophosphates and E. coli, Grundy may speak also to a shift in public opinion.

Grundy's ultimate battle with Pemberton, before a Lands Tribunal, began in last night's edition of *The Archers* and the denouement is likely on Friday. If, as we expect, Grundy wins, the outcome will break with the recent real-life trend: each of the last

three such cases has resulted in the tenant's eviction. A fictional outcome in favour of Grundy would, however, seem far more "real" to the listeners, who number nearly four million.

The long success of *The Archers* owes something to what Tom Wolfe once called "identifying the correct emotion". Television soaps may have sought audiences with tales of lesbians, gays, adulterers and murderers, and even *The Archers* has from time to time strayed down such paths. But the real modernity of *The Archers* lies in its gradual transition from a show designed to keep farmers abreast of agricultural trends to one which now keeps a sceptical urban population in touch with what Big Agriculture is up to.

The Grundy-Pemberton drama perfectly encapsulates this change. Little farmer against big landowner is a microcosm of shopkeeper against supermarket, environmentalist against motorway, Third Division peasant against Premiership nobility.

Eddie Grundy deserves to win this week in order to prove that the loveable rogue is alive and well. City-dwellers may not all think about the countryside very much; they may visit it sparingly; but we all want reassurance that its population includes people like the Grundys, all up to their ankles in the material of which Pemberton is a bit.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9RN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Reply to Labour's agenda for unions

From Mr Ian Lang, MP for Galloway and Upper Nithsdale (Conservative)

Sir, From Tony Blair's article on Labour's union agenda ("We won't look back to the 1970s", March 31) I can only conclude either that the Labour leader does not know the detail of Labour Party policy, or that his party is afraid to tell the electorate the truth.

For instance, Mr Blair claims that it is "wrong" to say that Labour would grant employees full employment rights from their first day. But according to Labour's chief employment spokesman, Ian McCartney, it is "total nonsense" to suggest Labour would not grant full employment protection rights to employees from their first day of employment (*Tribune*, June 29, 1996).

Mr Blair claims it is "false" to assert that Labour and the TUC are "to set up a new agency to oversee union recognition". According to Composite 13 on "Rights at work", as passed at the 1996 Labour conference, a new "Representation Agency" would have powers to award consultation rights to a union. This would have "both trade union and employee involvement".

Mr Blair claims to have "rejected the TUC proposals, which were for wider rights of representation". Again, in passing Composite 13, the 1996 Labour conference endorsed a policy requiring only 10 per cent of the relevant workforce to vote for statutory recognition. It has always been the case that Labour's policy is that which has been duly passed by the party's conference. If that is no longer the case, Mr Blair should say so.

Under new Labour there would indeed be a "strikers' charter". Labour would allow strikers to claim unfair dismissal — a privilege never before enjoyed by the unions in Britain, even when Michael Foot was Employment Secretary.

On Wednesday we will set out our proposals on industrial relations which will protect the public from excessive strike action, in contrast to Labour's plans to give the unions the favours they have demanded.

Yours faithfully,
IAN LANG
(President of the Board of Trade),
House of Commons.
March 31.

Economics and voters

From Ms Mary Russell

Sir, I note that new Labour is pointing out our warnings in yet another report by "experts" predicting economic pitfalls ahead (details, March 25).

I cannot help but think that if the Chancellor had listened to the pronouncements of such "experts" our present economic wellbeing would have founders months ago.

There is one sure way to continue the present prosperity and avoid the predicted disasters: re-elect the Government, and with it a Chancellor who listens to his own finely-tuned instincts rather than to so-called experts or the equally uninspired pronouncements of new Labour.

Yours faithfully,
MARY RUSSELL
5 Cedar Road, Sunion, Surrey.
March 25.

From Mr Maurice Fitzpatrick

Sir, You report (Election 97, March 29) on the manifesto of the Communist Party, which calls for an income tax rate of 50 per cent on incomes over £50,000.

In 1982-83, the last year of Lady Thatcher's first term, the top rate of tax on earned income was 60 per cent: this applied to income in excess of £31,500. Allowing for price inflation, the starting point for Lady Thatcher's 60 per cent top rate was broadly similar to the starting point for the 50 per cent top rate proposed by the Communist Party.

Furthermore, in 1982-83 unearned income could be taxed at up to 75 per cent: half as much again as the top rate now proposed by the Communist Party.

How far the debate on tax has moved. In the space of just 15 years, high marginal tax rates really do have to disappear for good.

Yours faithfully,
M. C. FITZPATRICK
(Head of Economics),
Chantrey Velocett (accountants),
10-12 Russell Square, WC1.
March 25.

Business letters, page 29

Care of the elderly

From Mr Peter Orr

Sir, Put simply, the problem about caring for the elderly (letters, March 19) is that it offers no route to that "quick fix" which props up so many ministerial boasts about the effectiveness of the NHS. "X million patients treated last year" may sound impressive enough, but long-term care for the elderly spoils such figures.

Those of us who believe it to be a vital issue are obliged to go on repeating that in Britain today there

really is such a thing as society, and that society owes a duty of care to its senior members.

Yours faithfully,
PETER ORR
17 Berkley Drive,
Guisborough, Cleveland.

Homosexuality in the Armed Forces

From Mr Martin Bowley, QC

Sir, I note with some concern your reports of March 24 and 25 on the Army's attitudes to homosexuality, followed by today's letter from the Minister of State for the Armed Forces, Mr Nicholas Soames.

I recall the welcome and positive response only last week from the political and military leaders of the Ministry of Defence to the survey from the Office for Public Management, which found that racism is endemic in the Armed Forces (report, March 21). This was in striking contrast to their response a year earlier to the Homosexual Policy Assessment Team's report (details, March 5, 1996). That document revealed a shocking degree of blatant and strident homophobia within the Armed Forces.

Outrageously homophobic quotations from serving men were included in the HPAT report to justify its conclusion that the ban on gays in the military should remain. At the time neither the Defence Minister nor any of the Chiefs of Staff appeared to be in any way embarrassed by the level of homophobia disclosed. As Michael Brown, MP, said in the course of the debate on the report "prejudice is prejudice, whether it is racial or sexual, and prejudice is wrong. It must be outlawed".

So neither the Secretary of State for Defence, Mr Michael Portillo, nor Mr Soames, nor Sir Jock Slater, the Chief of Naval Staff, have provided the leadership required if the barracks culture of the forces is to begin to be changed to bring it into line with the culture of the rest of society.

Homosexuals have helped to ensure the efficacy of the British Armed Services for years. It is time this is recognised and their actions commended.

Yours faithfully,
BEN DUNN,
53 Byron Mews,
Fleet Road, NW3.
March 26.

Prejudice and care of the young

From Mr Brian Simpson

Sir, Mr A. P. Millard, the Headmaster of Giggleswick School (letter, March 27), asks what messages are being sent to young people and their parents by the Army's movement towards removing its ban on homosexuality, and by the Scouts' decision to accept them as leaders.

The answer, I would suggest, is as follows: that prejudice is wrong, that human beings should be judged by their qualities and their behaviour and that all people are capable of being decent and moral.

I am sure these are messages which Mr Millard would applaud, and if he is not already sending them to his own pupils I trust that he will now make a start.

Yours sincerely,
BRIAN SIMPSON,
50 Milton Park, N6.
March 27.

Lay magistrates

From the Chairman of Council of the Magistrates' Association

Sir, Contrary to the views expressed by Mr Michael Gould of Staffordshire University (letter, March 28), lay magistrates are well trained, are members of, and represent their local communities and administer justice to their fellow citizens with fairness and integrity, dealing with 99 per cent of all cases which come through the courts.

Local advisory committees must satisfy the Lord Chancellor's requirements and recommend to him for appointment a cross-section of people from the local community, keeping a balance of gender, type of employment and various other characteristics. They are particularly concerned to recruit magistrates from local ethnic groups and in the last few years the percentage of these has been 7 per cent, a greater percentage than in the total population.

Newly appointed magistrates undergo comprehensive training before they start to sit in court and all magistrates have to train regularly.

Yours faithfully,
CLIVE LINSSEN,
Langdale Hall,
The University of Manchester,
Upper Park Road,
Victoria Park, Manchester.
March 25.

London's traffic

From Dr Gabriel Alexander Khoury

Sir, In their letters of March 21, Dr Martin Cragg, of the Institution of Highways and Transportation, and Lord Berkeley, of the Railfreight Group, question the London Expressways' proposal for reducing surface traffic in London by means of a road tunnel network linking the motorways across and around the capital.

They do so chiefly on the grounds of cost and the disruption to traffic that would be caused by the current upgrading of the North Circular road.

The tunnels need not only be radial; they could also be orbital, as in the case of the Paris and Stockholm projects.

The cost of the system, which will be complementary to public transport and integrated with it, would be more than recovered by tolls and by environmental, social and economic benefits.

Yours faithfully,
G. A. KHOOURY (Project Director,
London Expressways),
Imperial College of Science,
Technology and Medicine,
Department of Civil Engineering,
Imperial College Road, SW7.

March 24.

improvements to the surface environment, air quality and character of the city.

Improvements in public transport are essential, but it is a fallacy to assume that this alone will solve London's traffic problems.

Contrary to Dr Cragg's suggestion, the tunnels will not involve a significant disruption of services, as they will not use the "cut and cover" method but he bored deep beneath existing facilities. Disruption to the surface would be minimal for a project of this scale and certainly less than the disruption caused by the current upgrading of the North Circular road.

The tunnels need not only be radial; they could also be orbital, as in the case of the Paris and Stockholm projects.

The cost of the system, which will be complementary to public transport and integrated with it, would be more than recovered by tolls and by environmental, social and economic benefits.

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY ALMINT,
Winston House,
Boughton, Northampton.
April 1.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046.

Easter manifesto on a central truth

From Mr Philip A. C. Campbell



COURT CIRCULAR

WINDSOR CASTLE

April 1: The Hon Mary Morrison has succeeded Lady Abel Smith as Lady in Waiting to the Queen.

CLARENCE HOUSE

April 1: Dame Frances Campbell-Preston has succeeded the Hon Mrs Rhodes as Lady-in-Waiting to Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother.

Today's royal engagements

Princess Margaret, as President of the Guide Association, will open the new Alton Westbrook District Guide Headquarters, Chawton Park Road, Alton, Hampshire, at 3.30.

The Duchess of Gloucester will open the Benington Centre and the Bradgate Mental Health Unit at Glenfield, Leicester, at 3.00; will open the Royal Leicestershire, Rutland and Wye Society for the Blind's Welcome Home Project, Byres Mansions, at 4.00; she will open the Hinckley and District Museum, Hinckley, at 6.35; and as Patron of the National Association of Gifted Children, will attend a dinner at the Hanover International Hotel at 7.35 to mark the association's 30th anniversary. The Duke of Kent will visit the Welsh Council for Voluntary Action, Llys Ifor, Crescent Road, Caerphilly, Mid-Glamorgan, at 12.05; will visit Ocean Technical Glass, Cardiff Bay, at 2.15; will visit Techniques Science Discovery Centre, Stewart Street, at 3.15; and as Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England, will attend a dinner at the Masonic Hall, Guildford Street, Cardiff, at 5.00.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Charlemagne, King of the Franks and Holy Roman Emperor 804-14; Alix d'Aspre, 747; Giovanni, Cavassina, adventurer, Venice, 1723; Hans Christian Andersen, storywriter, Copenhagen, 1805; William Holman Hunt, painter, member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, London, 1827; Emily, Zola, novelist and critic, Paris, 1843; Sergei Rachmaninov, composer and pianist, One, Russia, 1873; Max Ernst, Surrealist painter, and son, Brithi, Germany, 1891; Marvin Gaye, singer, Washington, DC, 1989.

DEATHS: Samuel Morse, painter and inventor of the telegraphic code, using his name, New York, 1872; C.S. Forester, novelist, Folkestone, Kent, 1902; Georges Pompidou, President of France 1969-74, Paris, 1974. Argentina invaded the Falkland Islands, 1982.

BMDS: 0171 680 6880
PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

Lord of the Admiralty I have called to your heart my love, Lord, let your ears be attentive to my application.

Psalms 130: 1, 2

BIRTHS

AGATHOCLEON - On March 22nd at The Portland Hospital, to Nella and George, a daughter, Nicolette, a sister for Christopher, 10.05 am.

AMAND - On March 21st at The Portland Hospital, to Nishi and Mabesa, a son, Amari Sigeo, a brother for Christopher, 10.05 am.

CARINA - On 23rd March 1997, to Kate (née Hamrick) and Duncan, a daughter, Eliza Rose, 10.05 am.

CARINA - On March 22nd at The Portland Hospital, to John and Sandra, a son, Stephan (Joseph) Orlan Edward, a brother for Darcey, 10.05 am.

COPP - On March 24th at The Portland Hospital, to Connie and Brian, a son, Connor, a brother for Christopher, 10.05 am.

COWAN - On 25th March to The Portland Hospital, to Karen (née Abbott-Anderson) and Peter, a son, Frederick Hugh.

DARREN - On March 27th to Anneke (née Taylor) and Stephen, a son, William Edward, a brother for Alexander and Philip.

DEAN - On 28th March, to Angus and Katherine (née Miller), a daughter, Isobel Mary, a sister for James and Anna.

DADE - On March 27th, 1997, Louise (née Burton) and James, a daughter, Poppy.

DEAN - On March 27th, 1997, to Helen (née Peacock) and Richard, a daughter, Charlotte Olivia.

DEAN - On 31st March, to March, to Antonia and James, a son, Joshua, and Valerie, Elizabeth.

DEAN - On March 25th 1997 at home, to Sam (née Griffith) and Helen, a son, Luke William Griffith, a brother and fifth son, named for Imogen and Jack.

DEERSON - On March 28th, to Christopher (née Baker) and David, a son, George, 10.05 am.

DEERSON - On March 28th, to Alison (née Seddon) and Andrew, a daughter, Caitlin Isabelle Verity, a sister for Alexander and Isabella.

DEERSON - On March 27th, to The Portland Hospital, to Connie (née Roberts) and Max, a daughter, Katherine Jennifer Sophie, a sister for James.

DEAN - On March 26th at The Portland Hospital, to David and Caroline, a son, Cieran.

DEAN - On March 11th in Hong Kong, to Victoria, a son, Michael, and Helen, a daughter, The Honourable Julie Helen Mary.

Recorders

The following have been appointed

South Eastern Circuit

E H Bailey, J K Benson, Mrs M O Blackford-Smith, Miss M R Brown, W Boyce, B M Bucknall, QC, P C Clements, J I Cohen, M G Collins, QC, Professor R F Cranston, L S Crawford, A J C Edwards-Stuart, QC, C R George, QC, A M D Havelock-Allan, QC, The Hon Philip Havers, QC, J W Hirst, QC, H E G Hodge, M A Hunter (Assistant Judge Advocate General), S L Isaacs, QC, W J Jones, Miss L N R Karmil, K M J Lewison, QC, J W Martin, QC, Lord Merton, QC, P B Morgan, QC, The Hon J C Pudde, QC, S R Powles, QC, D J Rennie, P E B M Russel, QC, N Stewart, N Sweeney, P J Talbot, QC, N J M Treade, P R Thornton, QC, I K R Wilson, R L J Wood, QC.

Premium Bonds

The £1 million prize in the Premium Bond draw for April was won with bond number 67MZ 837234. The winner lives in Strathclyde, and has a bond holding of £19,950.

Birthdays today

Admiral Sir Michael Boyce, 54; Sir Jack Brabham, racing driver, 71; Sir Graham Bright, MP, 55; Sir Ian Christie, athlete, 37; Sir Marshall Sir Geoffrey Dinen, 79; Captain Sir Richard Dobbs, former Lord Lieutenant of Co Antrim, 78; Sir Christopher Francis civil servant, 63; Miss Catherine Castle, author, 68; Mr Brian Glover, actor, 63; Mr Raymond Gubbay, concert promoter, 51; Sir Alan Guiness, CH, author, 83; Viscount Hambleden, 67; Mr Tim Hayes, Headmaster, Monmouth School, Gwent, 42; Mr Barry Hills, racehorse trainer, 60; Sir Ian Hunter, impresario, 76; Miss Penelope Keith, actress, 57; Sir Peter Middleton, deputy chairman, Bank, 62; the Marquess of Northampton, 51; Major-General C.J. Popham, 70; Mr A.C. Puddefoot, former general secretary, Liberty, 47; Mr M.G. Rizello, sculptor and coin designer, 71; Sir Denis Rookes, FRS, former chairman, British Gas, 73; Lord Skelman, 52; Miss Sue Townsend, writer, 51; Mr Denis Tuohy, broadcaster, 60.

Surrey Lieutenancy

Deputy Lieutenants
Mr Adrian Sanders, of Buckland, and Colonel Nicolas Davies, JP, of Haslemere, have been appointed Deputy Lieutenants of Surrey.

University news

Lord Noth, chairman of the inquiry into standards in public life, has been elected Chancellor of Essex University. He succeeds Sir Patrick Nairne who is retiring after 14 years.

Edward David Abel Ram, of London NW1, left estate valued at £14,000.

He left £1,000 to the Samaritans and to the Family Holiday Association.

Walter Patrick Charles Owles, of London SW1, left estate valued at £140,892 net.

He left £1,000 to the Samaritans and to the Family Holiday Association.

Pauline Davies, of Chipstow, Gwent, left estate valued at £1,068,232 net.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr E.J. Powell
and Miss P.H. Morris

The engagement is announced between Edward, son of Mr and Mrs John Powell, of West Kensington, and Penelope, younger daughter of Sir Nigel and the Hon Lady Mabel, of Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire.

Mr N.P. Backhouse
and Miss A.M. McConnell

The engagement is announced between Nicholas Paul, son of Mr and Mrs Peter Backhouse, of Shrewsbury, Shropshire, and Audrey Margaret, daughter of Mr and Mrs Daniel McConnell, of Milngavie, Glasgow.

Mr A.D. Bayne-Jardine
and Miss L.H. Dunn

The engagement is announced between Andrew, son of Mr and Mrs Colin Bayne-Jardine, of Clifton, Bristol, and Lois, daughter of Mr and Mrs Ian Dunn, of Kippen, Stirlingshire.

Mr R.F. Hoult
and Miss S.M. Greenwood

The engagement is announced between Richard Francis, younger son of Mr and Mrs Francis Hoult, of Worksop, Nottingham, and Sarah Moira, daughter of Lieutenant Colonel Roy Greenwood, (Retd) OBE, and the late Mrs Moira Greenwood, of West Ashton, Wiltshire.

Mr R.A.K. Maxwell
and Miss K.A. Ryan

The engagement is announced between Robert, elder son of Brigadier and Mrs John Maxwell, of Hambleton, Hampshire, and Kimberly, daughter of Mr and Mrs Tim Ryan, of Sun Valley, USA.

Mr D.J. McQueen Johnston
and Miss L.J. Adams

The engagement is announced between David, only son of the late Mr James McQueen Johnston and of Mrs Sue Ayers, of Wokingham, Berkshire, and Lisa, daughter of Mr and Mrs R.G. Adams, of Lighthorne, Warwickshire.

Mr P.R. Wells
and Miss H.S. Dresser

The engagement is announced between Paul, elder son of Mr and Mrs Richard Wells, of Ruislip, and Hayley, daughter of Mr and Mrs Clive Dresser, of the British Embassy, Peking.

Mr J. McQueen Johnston
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OBITUARIES

OTTO JOHN

Otto John, secret agent, died in Austria on March 26 aged 88. He was born in Germany on March 19, 1909.

Otto John was undoubtedly one of the most enigmatic figures in the history of Western and German intelligence. His bizarre story has become a classic spy case of claim and counterclaim, generating a mystery still unresolved at the time of his death.

Born in Marburg on the Lahn, John was educated in Wiesbaden before going on to study Law at Berlin University. In 1937 he joined the legal department of Lufthansa's Berlin office. His immediate superior was Klaus Bonhoeffer, brother of Dietrich.

As a key member of the courageous group of Germans involved in the plot to assassinate Hitler in 1944, he maintained close contact with the British secret intelligence service, MI6, through Kim Philby. When, on July 22, the plot failed, John, still working for Lufthansa, managed in the nick of time to secure a seat on a flight to Madrid. He thus evaded the Gestapo and the certain torture and death they promised.

From Spain he came to England, where he worked for British intelligence and the BBC. Charming, brave and debonair, he rapidly acquired an impressive set of friends: a talent exploited well in the Third Reich, where his circle ranged from Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia, second son to the heir of the Hohenzollern dynasty, to leading Roman Catholic, conservative and left-wing members of the resistance. In London he became friends with John Wheeler-Bennett (for whom he did painstaking research work on the German army), Hugh Carleton-Greene and Maurice Oldfield (later to become a "C" of MI6).

He then returned to Germany where he assisted with the trials of Nazi war criminals, including von Manstein, von Brauchitsch and von Rundstedt. By studying his war diary, John was able to prove that, contrary to his testimony, Manstein had known about the extermination of the Jews. At the same time he assisted in the defence of the former head of the German Foreign Office, Ernst von Weizsäcker (the father of the subsequent Federal President), on trial at Nuremberg for assisting in the Holocaust. There is some evidence to suggest that he began work for MI6 at this time, helping Sir Roger Hollis to combat Soviet subversion.

In 1950, having returned to West Germany, John found himself appointed the first head of the West German security service (the Stasi), the Bundesamt für Ver-

fassungsschutz. This post, it emerged thirty years later, had been given to John at the behest of British Intelligence. The West Germans had been invited to put forward names of candidates which the British would then consider. A dozen were advanced, all of which were, somewhat surprisingly, rejected: but the 13th – John's – was accepted.

It is hard to believe that references were not supplied by those British Intelligence officers whom John had befriended. Many West Germans considered him a peculiar choice for such an important job, and he soon turned to drink. John himself believed that a connection through marriage to the first President of the Federal Republic had landed him the post of Dietrich.

In July 1954, however, while on a visit to West Berlin, John suddenly disappeared, only to re-surface in East Berlin, from where he proceeded to make several bitter and damaging public statements about the alleged ambitions of the new West German leadership and Konrad Adenauer, the first Federal Chancellor, whom he called a neo-Nazi revisionist. Adenauer (at first inclined to believe that John had been kidnapped) was not at all amused.

Although it seemed obvious that John had defected, with all the serious implications for Western intelligence that such a defection carried, a decision was taken to play this down and to support the notion that he had been drugged, even though two senior border officials had seen John and described him as "cheerful" on this trip East.

The circumstances of that incident have never been completely clarified; and because of the sensitive nature of John's work, many of his activities remain shrouded in mystery.

Certainly there were those who believed that John's presence in East Berlin was a defection, which proved that he had been a Soviet penetration agent ever since the 1930s. Others, however, claimed either that he had succumbed to alcoholism before being duped by the Communists, or, more favourably, that as a genuine German patriot John had allowed his career and reputation to be ruined by his determination to fight a resurgence of Nazism. This latter line was the one taken by many English friends, including Oldfield and Hugh Trevor-Roper (Lord Dacre), as well as John's German supporters, many of whom had suffered for their fight against Hitler and possessed the finest credentials.

On December 12, 1955, the day fixed by the West German Bundestag for an inquiry into John's activities, he sprang a second surprise by reappearing in West Germany, arguing that he had indeed been drugged and abducted against his will. He



Otto John outside the courtroom during his trial in Karlsruhe

was immediately arrested, not for treachery, but for acting on behalf of the Communists, and a two-year sentence was requested. The court imposed double this. John tried unsuccessfully on five different occasions to get this verdict quashed, most recently in January last year.

After his release, John went to live in Igls, Austria, in a house owned by Prince Louis Ferdinand. In 1986 the Federal President, Richard von Weizsäcker, granted him a pension which John claimed implied his innocence. After the collapse of the East German regime, John stated that research of the Stasi archives showed that there was no file on him, and argued that this was his final proof of his innocence. Others said that it showed how important he had been, and that his papers had been transferred to Moscow several months before the Wall had fallen.

He stuck to his account for the rest of his life. In his book, *Zweimal kam ich Heim*, published in 1969, he said he had gone to West Berlin to commemorate the tenth anniversary

of the plot against Hitler. He claimed that, having been kidnapped in a friend's flat, his only hope of surviving was to play along with the Communists; his radio attack on Adenauer had been a "really big lie" designed to make it obvious that he was acting under duress.

Yet even upon this point confusion prevailed. Some friends, such as Clifton Child of the British Foreign Office, accepted John's version.

Trevor-Roper, on the other hand, argued that John believed the things he was saying in East Berlin and genuinely feared a neo-Nazi revival.

The British journalist Sefton Delmer (who had worked with John during the war) attended one of his East German press conferences and had a private meeting with him: he was in no doubt at all that John was acting of his own free will. Yet Delmer was himself a shadowy figure when it came to Communist affairs and when John reappeared in the West, Delmer changed his testimony and said it was plain that John had been acting.

There is no doubt that, whatever

his motivation, John had been deeply shaken by the decision to rearm West Germany, and by the way former supporters of National Socialism had been given important posts in the Bonn Republic. In particular, he resented the appointment of General Gehlen, Hitler's former Abwehr specialist on the Soviet armed forces, as head of the second German Intelligence Agency, the BND, or Federal Intelligence Service, at the insistence of the United States. When Gehlen was asked for a view on John in 1954 he replied curiously "once a traitor, always a traitor"; a wholly unwarranted slur on John's part in the 1944 plot.

For many in the West, the verdict on John was either that he was yet another Communist mole injected into a Western intelligence service, or that he was the victim of a Communist crime and the harsh cruelty of the Cold War. For a few, John was something quite different: a German patriot who rejected Adenauer's vision of a West German part-nation, locked into NATO and the West, because (like a number of others) he saw this state as inhibiting rather than furthering unity.

Yet another explanation is no less plausible. John, like many others of his generation, found himself trapped by the tide of history. Willingly or unwillingly, he may have been caught up in the macabre attempts of Soviet intelligence to forge a bridgehead in the British secret services. There was no doubt that he fought against National Socialism; but there is no evidence of any great dislike of Communism. This, combined with an uncertain personal life, may have made him an easy prey to a more committed Soviet agent like Philby.

If Philby believed that in 1950 he had managed to get John into a sensitive post, it made sense in 1954, when West Germany was about to join the European Defence Community, to get him to denounce that policy (indeed, the French Assembly voted against West Germany at that time). Equally, such a link might provide the final piece in the jigsaw: the reason why Otto John returned to the West in 1955. It was then that Sir Dick White became "C" of MI6. White's suspicions of Philby were already well-formed. John's defection confirmed his doubts. John's journey back, however, dispelled them – for a time, at least.

John deserved credit for the things he did well, in particular his staunch opposition to Hitler and Nazi ambitions, sustained within the citadels of Third Reich Berlin. The final verdict on his actions after 1944 must await the opening of the former Soviet archives.

Otto John's wife, the singer Lucie Manen, predeceased him in 1991.

There is no doubt that, whatever

HUGO WEISGALL

Hugo Weisgall, composer, died in New York on March 11 aged 84. He was born in Eibenschenz, Moravia, on October 13, 1912.

HUGO WEISGALL was a versatile composer whose works included song-cycles, chamber music and large-scale liturgical settings; he was also an effective conductor, administrator and teacher. But it is as one of America's most significant and successful composers of opera that he will best be remembered.

Weisgall wrote his first operas when he was barely into his twenties, and in the dozen or so he wrote from 1948 onwards he made an enduring contribution to the genre.

Ranging in musical idiom from refined neoclassicism to austere atonal modernism, they are distinguished by the coherence and literary merit of their libretos, the deftness of their characterisation, and the depth of their philosophical ambition; all are extremely well crafted.

Hugo Weisgall was born into a Jewish family in what is now Ivancice, Bohemia. The family had a strong musical tradition and for several generations had produced cantors and composers. Emigrating to the United States in 1920, they settled in Baltimore, Maryland, where Hugo Weisgall studied at the Peabody Conservatory from 1927 to 1932. He went on to study composition with Roger Sessions and conducting with Fritz Reiner.

Military service brought him to Europe, where he was involved, thanks to his fluency in several languages, in liaison with various governments in exile. He also found time to compose and conduct, and was active in promoting American music to European audiences.

Returning to the United States, he embarked on a teaching career which was to include spells at the Baltimore Institute of Arts, Johns Hopkins University and the Juilliard School; he also served as chairman of the faculty of the Cantors' Institute in New York. From 1963 to 1973 he was president of the American Music Centre.

Weisgall began to make his reputation as an opera composer with two one-act operas

first performed in 1952: *The Tenor*, based on a play by Wedekind, and *The Stranger*, after Strindberg; the latter, a dramatic monologue for soprano, is one of his most intense and impressive works.

Larger-scale operas followed. *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, a sophisticated treatment of Pirandello's teasing play, was premiered by New York City Opera in 1959, with the soprano Beverly Sills in one of the leading roles. Weisgall's taste for heavyweight literary sources was further evident in *Purgatory*, based on Yeats and first performed in Washington



in 1961, and *Atahualpa*, after Racine, given a concert performance in New York in 1964.

With those works Weisgall evolved his own idiosyncratic version of musical expressionism, and showed a striking ability to match musical means to contrasting dramatic situations. More ambitious, and ultimately less successful, was *Nine Rivers from Jordan* (1968), a libretto by Denis Johnson, a vast, rather diffuse work which attempted to tackle the moral and philosophical questions raised by the Second World War and the Holocaust.

After an opera based on a modern *Noah* play by Yukio Mishima (*Jenny*, or *The Hundred Nights*, 1976), and a 1992 revision of his 1959 opera *The Garden of Adonis*, Weisgall returned in his final opera, *Esther*, to the subject of the Holocaust – this time to better effect, treating it in parable form and with convincing restraint. Performed at New York City Opera in 1993, it is due to be revived there next season.

Hugo Weisgall is survived by his wife, Nathalie Shulman, whom he married in 1942, and by their son and daughter.

PERSONAL COLUMN

SITUATIONS VACANT

FLIGHTS DIRECTORY

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Cana 0209 Israel 0109
Mil 0209 New Zealand 0109
P 0209 Turkey 0109

Flight agents: 01273 700737

0990 239904

FLIGHTSEATS

International: 0105 0209 0208

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Major sets a '20p tax' deadline

■ John Major will today promise to aim for a 20p basic rate of income tax within the next five years as part of a "formula for prosperity" designed to keep Britain booming.

It will be the first time that he has said when he hopes to achieve that goal, and he intends to contrast his deadline to Labour's allegedly vague commitment to an eventual bottom rate of 10p. The expansion of educational choice will also be at the heart of his appeal to the country..... Page 1

Stars urged to give to help the gifted

■ Pop groups, actors and film stars will be given incentives to give some of their royalties to a fund to sponsor talented youngsters under a plan being unveiled in Labour's manifesto tomorrow. A National Endowment for Science and the Arts would also be partly funded by the Lottery..... Page 1

Thames danger

Boats on the Thames are being warned of an increasing risk of running aground after two years of record-breaking drought and a month of exceptionally dry weather..... Page 1

Expensive handicap

Golf clubs are missing out on millions of pounds in lottery grants because they refuse to admit women members, sports Council report says..... Page 1

Jail ship go-ahead

The first prison ship inmates since the Victorian age will board HM Prison Weare at the end of the month after Labour endorsed planning approval for its onshore facilities..... Page 2

Princess accusation

Diana, Princess of Wales, accused a paparazzi photographer of harassing her when she admitted enlisting a passer-by to remove his film..... Page 3

School crackdown

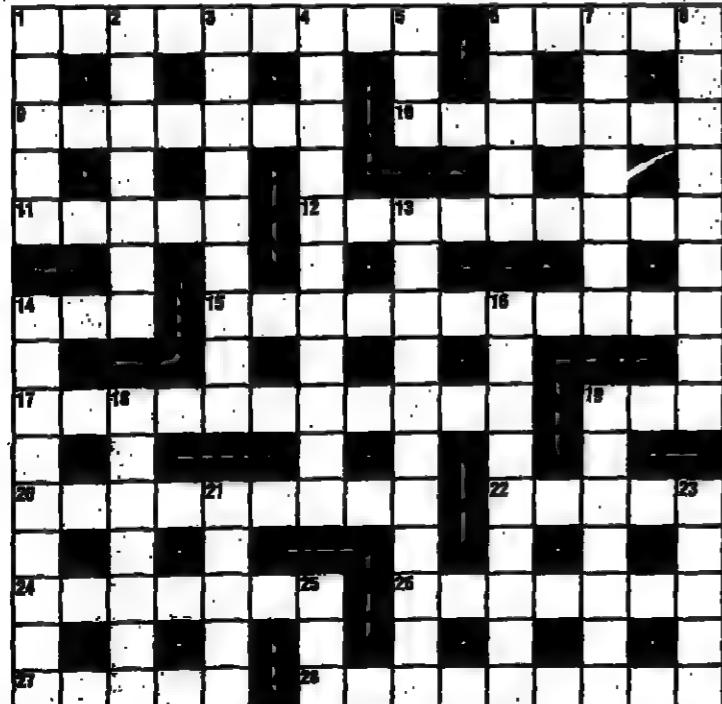
Teachers launched a concerted attempt to stem the growing level of violence in schools as the two biggest classroom unions threatened not to teach the most disruptive pupils..... Page 4

Supermac ban

Malcolm MacDonald, the former England footballer Supermac, was banned for two years for driving while three times over the legal limit..... Page 6

Snouts to get national pay scale

■ Detectives are to fix a national pay scale for police informers in an attempt to bring proper accounting to the murky world of the snitch. Tips will be valued using a points system, each point being worth between £50 and £100. Informers could earn up to £3,000. A pay scale, drawn up by a working party, will be put to a conference of 150 senior detectives this week..... Page 1

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,443**ACROSS**

- A bit of body in what might be Cheshire cheese (9).
- Company's initially to settle legal expenses (5).
- A drink for the road? (7).
- Source of light transmitted by relay (7).
- Plenty of time to muse (5).
- Pain afflicted profitless bargain-hunter (9).
- Finally, one can read conclusion (3).
- Poor sort of existence revealed by Ruth and Ted on here (4-2-5).
- Community entering carriage in quiet rage (8).
- America's first state? Whichever you want (3).
- Flight passengers swayed around end of March, renamed Christmas (9).
- Impish classic author's not American (5).
- One-sided School of opposition, like Morris' and Cassius (7).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,442

CASINGTON LYDIAN
A C E R A O B
T R E M E N D O U S G E R M
S I N G E R D I
P I E C E V I N S T A N D
A I T E R F Y G
W H I T E B E E M G R O S I E R
S A A N
C U S T O D Y SWEATER
P E M M I N U E
S E N T I M E N T A L I S T
I H A N U M I T R
G R A U S P E G D O L I T E
G O D H Y U V A
U N D E R E S U R I E N T

26 Emerge champion rider of white horses? (7).

27 Mountain range is a cold place if beginner's abandoned (5).

28 Racecourse favourite's warm welcome (3,6).

29 Throw off English class system (5).

30 Lad confused in opinion that divides the country? (7).

31 It plays a large part in computing, however (9).

32 Near water, he destructively fired vessels (11).

33 Sander, perhaps, not finishing as well (3).

34 Keen on exercise, so vault (5).

35 Cutting last act of *Madam Butterfly*? (7).

36 Steadfastly combat the flow of lady, taking no notice (9).

37 Made an enemy of worker on San Diego building (11).

38 Lenient president's support for extended siting (4,5).

39 Choral work unfinished in scholar's inactive spells (9).

40 Got hot in oven (and vice versa) (7).

41 Artist getting up to fix source of light (7).

42 Prizewinner's important role diminished (5).

43 Article given short measure? It's a crime (5).

44 Mother's ruin's beginning damage (3).

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Masked IRA men brandish machine guns to the cheers of about 1,000 supporters at a Belfast Sinn Fein rally yesterday Page 12

Abandoned in space

Nasa, the US space agency, has pulled the plug on the too-costly spacecraft *Pioneer 10*, launched in March 1972 to explore Jupiter and now more than six billion miles away..... Page 6

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Israel's embattled Prime Minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, angrily accused Egypt of "fanning the flames of radicalism" in the Middle East..... Page 15

Lost signal

Thousands of "off-base" Britons in Cyprus face a future without Cilla Black, Jim Davidson and Mr Blobby after British Forces television began scrambling its signal after pressure from struggling local stations..... Page 15

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Pakistan's parliament stripped the President of the power — exercised four times since martial law ended in 1985 — to dismiss elected governments and dissolve the national assembly..... Page 16

Marriage target

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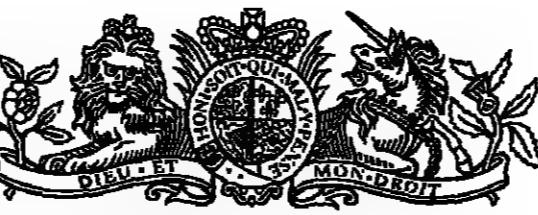
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Power restored

THE TIMES

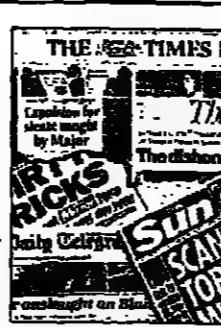


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WEDNESDAY APRIL 2 1997

London depressed by Wall Street gloom



Nail-biting time for traders on Liffe

By JANET BUSH IN LONDON AND
RICHARD THOMSON IN NEW YORK

LONDON shares suffered sharp falls yesterday as investors reacted to huge losses on Wall Street over the Easter period, when the City was closed.

However, Wall Street's robust performance yesterday helped the London market and continental European bourses to bounce back from extensive selling at the opening. In London, the FTSE-100 index closed 64.8 points lower at 4,248.1, the day's best level. At its worst, the index of leading shares had posted losses of more than 100 points.

In an unusual comment on financial market developments, Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor, yesterday emphasized that the market's difficulties reflected events on Wall Street rather than fears of an incoming Labour government. In Paris and

Frankfurt, shares also rebounded from dramatic early losses as the Dow Jones industrial average perked up after two days of extreme selling. On Thursday, the Dow lost 140 points followed by a 157-point plunge on Monday when many European markets were closed for Easter, but stabilised yesterday.

The Dow initially fell 34 points, but recovered by mid-morning to 6,573.66, 9.82 points below its opening. The rebound began after the publication of the March index of the National Association of Purchasing Managers. Although this rose to 50.0 in March, from 53.1 in February, a sign of quickening expansion in manufacturing industry, the purchasing managers' prices indicator fell to 50.9, from 53.1 the previous month.

This allayed some of the fears that built up on Wall Street after last week's quarter-point rise in American interest rates that

robust economic growth would lead to higher inflation and, therefore, a string of further monetary tightenings. The purchasing managers' report suggested that, while economic activity remains robust, inflationary pressures are not in evidence.

However, investors remained profoundly cautious about stocks. While there was some relief that European investors did not hit the US market with a wave of selling yesterday, most Wall Street analysts believe the current setback is not over.

Tom McManus, market strategist at NatWest markets in New York, said: "This is a correction, no doubt about it. The stabilisation of the Dow shows investors in a flight to larger, safer stocks. The broader market is still falling."

After a decline of more than 4 per cent over the past few days, the Dow is now down by more than 7 per cent from its peak

in January. An increasing number of analysts are turning negative on stocks, arguing that higher US interest rates will inevitably bear down on first-quarter corporate profits.

In Britain, the UK purchasing managers' March report showed manufacturing activity had expanded for the tenth successive month, but at a slower pace than in February. There are continuing signs that the strength of the pound is hurting exports, a worry expressed yesterday by the EEF, the grouping of engineering employers.

However, the pound marched higher yesterday, closing at 98.7 on its effective index against a basket of currencies, compared with 98.0 last Thursday.

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**BUSINESS
TODAY**

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FTSE 100 4268.1 (-84.8)
Yield - All share 3.60% (-0.23)
Nikkei 17688.59 (-133.51)
New York 6593.32 (+9.82)*
S&P Composite 758.82 (+1.66)

US RATE

Federal Funds 5.50% (5.14%)
T-Bond 7.00% (7.05%)

LONDON MONEY

5-month Investment 6.61% (6.61%)
Life long gilt future (Jun) 108.1% (108.1%)

STERLING

New York 1.6488* (1.6335)
London 1.6486 (1.6300)
\$ 2.5245 (2.5235)
F 2.3738 (2.3675)
SF 202.59 (201.54)
Yen 98.7 (98.0)

US DOLLAR

London 1.6708* (1.6741)
DM 8.4466 (8.4392)
F 1.4422* (1.4423)
Yen 122.67 (123.54)
S Index 108.1 (108.1)

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Jun) \$19.30 (\$19.50)

YEN

Tokyo close Yen 123.83

* denotes midday trading price

**Pubs and
bank to
create
new jobs**

By ALASDAIR MURRAY
AND GAVIN LUMSDEN

MORE than 15,000 new jobs are to be created in the leisure and banking sectors, it was announced yesterday.

J D Wetherspoon unveiled a £300 million expansion that will triple the size of the pub group's estate and create 10,000 jobs over five years.

First Direct, the Midland's telephone banking subsidiary, is to create up to 5,000 jobs in Scotland by 2004 with the construction at Hamilton in Lanarkshire of one of the largest call centres in the UK. It is also considering a second site in Greenock, Strathclyde.

Wetherspoon, which owns 170 pubs, is seeking to open another 350 outlets focusing on disused city centre sites — such as old banks — as it spreads out from the South East to Scotland and Wales.

Tim Martin, chairman of Wetherspoon, has set a target of having 1,000 outlets. Of the new jobs to be created, about 5,500 will be part-time.

Work on First Direct's 33-acre site in Hamilton will begin next month, the bank said yesterday. It already employs more than 3,000 at Leeds and Birmingham. First Direct says that it is opening 12,000 accounts every month.

The telephone bank was forced to confirm its expansion plans after Michael Forsyth, Secretary of State for Scotland, cited it as an example of the Government's success in attracting jobs to Scotland. Both sites are in enterprise zones that offer generous terms to relocating companies.



Robert Feld, managing director and the driving force behind Resort Hotels, was described by the judge as a man of quite appalling dishonesty

Japan bolsters banks after collapse

FROM ROBERT WHYMANT
IN TOKYO

JAPAN'S Finance Ministry sought to restore confidence in the nation's embattled financial system after an affiliate of the troubled Nippon Credit Bank collapsed with debts of 1,600 billion yen (about £5.2 billion), making it Japan's largest single corporate failure.

Anthony Evans, QC, prosecuting for the SFO, said: "Robert Feld was the driving force behind the business. He was Resort Hotels." Commenting on the sentence, Jillian Glass, the SFO lawyer who headed the investigation, said: "This is an excellent message. It tells people that they cannot play ducks and drakes with other people's money."

Michael Coleman, partner of Harkaway, the law firm acting for Feld, who received legal aid to conduct his case, said: "I saw Mr Feld immediately after the verdict. Naturally he was disappointed at the length of sentence which he has to serve". An appeal against the sentence is under consideration.

The prosecution was brought by the Serious Fraud Office working with the Sussex fraud squad. The SFO was called in

to investigate a 1992 rights issue by Resort which raised £140 million and in which the company was advised by Coopers & Lybrand, the accountant, and Barclays de Zoete Wedd, the merchant bank.

City institutions had been forecasting a profit of £6 million and Feld knew he had to meet this figure. Using forged documents, he persuaded the accountants and bankers that Resort's income would produce profits of this amount.

At the time Feld had personal borrowings with NatWest and Midland banks of more than £1 million and held the largest personal stake in Resort of 1.3 million shares. He relied on his salary, bonuses, dividends and the security of his shares to service his borrowings and maintain his lavish lifestyle.

Feld owned two properties in East Sussex, a house in Knightsbridge in the West End of London, and a fourth in the South of France where he also had a yacht moored at Beauvechain-sur-Mer. The court heard that the mooring of the boat alone cost £40,000.

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The deal, which sees Kroll bought by the insurance arm of Equifax, the world's largest consumer credit company, Equifax Insurance Services is being spun off into a new \$587 million company, ChoicePoint, and Kroll will form part of the stable.

The companies have been in talks for three years. ChoicePoint assesses insurance claims, and makes medical checks for the life and health industry. Buying Kroll

provides access to international markets. Kroll-watchers will approve of the match. The firm was signed up by Kuwait to track down Iraqi assets after the Gulf War, and unearthed Lord White's racehorses during Hanson's tussle with ICI. Kroll deals in corporate investigations and business intelligence, while a risk management arm takes in computer services work, kidnappings and ransom demands.

It. Disclosing the restructuring package, Hiroshi Kubota, NCB's president and chairman, said the bank would shut its overseas branches and concentrate on domestic investment. The retrenchment also involves selling office buildings, reducing staff and cutting pay by up to 30 per cent, with directors taking a 50 per cent cut.

The measures call for NCB to issue new shares to boost its capital by 300 billion yen. The Bank of Japan said it would buy shares using 80 billion yen from a fund created to clear bad loans at the failed juzen housing loan companies. At the urging of the monetary authorities, other banks are expected to accept newly floated shares to help to rebuild NCB's capital base.

The rescue, orchestrated by the Ministry of Finance, offered renewed evidence that the Government remains committed to supporting banks in trouble, despite the trend of promoting deregulation and less government intervention.

Analysts said it showed that the authorities still cling to the traditional "convoy system" that requires strong banks to help the weak.

Like most other Japanese banks, NCB's problems stem from the property market collapse after a surge of cautious lending during the bubble economy of the late 1980s. Many bad loans that NCB is having to write off were to juzen housing loan firms, which were hardest hit by the steep drop in land prices.

City sleuth's trail ends in takeover

BY JON ASHWORTH

KROLL ASSOCIATES, the

hard-nosed corporate investigator, has been swallowed by a company that makes its dustbin-sifting exploits look positively tame. The firm is being bought by an Atlanta-based insurance group that specialises in rooting out insurance cheats.

The deal is set to add to the

millions made by Jules Kroll,

who founded the Wall Street

firm in 1972, and sold a 23 per

cent stake to American Inter-

national Group (AIG) four

years ago. The fate of the AIG

stake is uncertain.

Kroll opened in London in

1982, occupying the former

MIS headquarters in Curzon

Street, Mayfair, and cashed in

on the market for intelligence

during hostile takeovers. Now

based in Savile Row, it recently

joined the City jobs debate,

hacking into dealers' personal

computers in an attempt to

prevent defections.

No value has been put on

the deal, which sees Kroll

bought by the insurance arm

of Equifax, the world's largest

consumer credit company.

Equifax Insurance Services is

being spun off into a new \$587

million company, ChoicePoint,

and Kroll will form part of the

stable.

The companies have been

in talks for three years. ChoicePoint assesses insurance

claims, and makes medical

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health industry. Buying Kroll

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The firm was signed up by

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and unearthed Lord White's

racehorses during Hanson's

tussle with ICI.

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House prices up 1%, says Halifax

UK house prices rose 1 per cent in March, according to the Halifax Building Society. But the UK's largest mortgage lender insisted the housing market is continuing to recover "at only a moderate pace".

The March increase followed a 0.6 per cent rise in February. The Halifax said the average seasonally-adjusted cost of a house was now £67,334. Prices were 7.2 per cent higher than the same time last year. "Despite a sharp rise in house prices in March, UK prices are still 4.2 per cent below their peak in May 1989," a Halifax spokesman said.

"Though we again confirm that the market is continuing to recover, this is still at only a moderate pace." Last week Nationwide said house prices rose 1.6 per cent in March.

Bars launch

Survey Free Inns said it is to launch a new brand — the "Bar Med" café bar. Tony Hill, Survey Free Inns managing director, said: "Bar Med will complement the group's existing portfolio in that they will be located in town centres and will be focused on trade from the business community by day and the pre-club crowd by night."

Stadco sale

Hall Engineering said it has sold the assets and business of Stadco Automation for around £8.4 million to Estel. Stadco is involved in the design and manufacture of automated assembly and welding systems. Its operating assets to December 31 were £11 million with operating profit prior to allocation of central costs, at £1.8 million.

Plysu deal

Plysu, the paper and packaging group, has bought Ward Products, a manufacturer of plastic gardening products at Darlaston, West Midlands, for just under £1 million.



PETER HORTON, managing director of Hit Entertainment, the children's cartoon programme maker that floated on the Alternative Investment Market in July last year,

with some of the group's characters. Hit yesterday reported a 91.5 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £1 million (£527,000) for the year to December 31. Sales rose 16.7

per cent to £11 million (£9.4 million) and earnings per share were up 73.5 per cent to 5.95p (3.45p). A maiden final dividend of 0.5p a share will be paid on June 11.

Suez shareholders seek large merger payout

FROM ADAM SAGE IN PARIS

FRENCH industrialists were last night engaged in a struggle for power and money over plans to merge Compagnie de Suez, the holding company, and Lyonnaise des Eaux, the utilities group.

Jean-Louis Beffa, chairman of Saint-Gobain, the glass manufacturer, said Suez's shareholders wanted a large payout if the merger goes ahead. With tensions mounting over his demand, and over other aspects of the deal, Suez cancelled a press conference on its 1996 results, scheduled for this morning.

Analysts said the last-minute cancellation was a sign of the difficulties that had arisen over what would be one of the biggest financial transactions in France.

Last week, Suez and Lyon-

aise des Eaux, confirmed market speculation that they were involved in merger talks. Both companies are to hold special board meetings on April 11 to discuss the deal.

Lyonnaise, which consists of holdings in the water, energy and construction sectors, needs a cash injection if it is to make up ground on its wealthier rival, Générale des Eaux.

At a press conference yesterday, M Beffa said shareholders should be given a payout of about 10 per cent of Suez's financial assets to enable Lyonnaise to expand. The group has assets of Fr34 billion and a cash pile of Fr5 billion.

Founded to oversee the Suez canal, the company lacks a clear strategy after selling Indosuez, its property portfolio and its investment bank. Analysts say the conglomerate that

would result from the tie-up would be among France's ten biggest companies and one of the most powerful players in European utilities. Lyonnaise, the smaller of the two, will absorb Suez. Investors are likely to receive about two shares in Lyonnaise for each Suez share, with a dividend for Suez shareholders.

At a press conference yesterday, M Beffa said shareholders should be given a payout of about 10 per cent of Suez's financial assets. "I think that it would not be bad for Suez shareholders, given the disappearance of what they have had in the past, and given the bet they are ready to take to put their financial assets behind a new conglomerate and give them a reasonable share, by redistributing financial assets to them."

He said Saint-Gobain, which has a 6 per cent stake in Suez, had the support of Axa-UAP, the insurer, and Banque Nationale de Paris, the banking group, which have similar stakes. Générale des Eaux, which opposes the merger, is also likely to back the request.

However, the sum demanded by M Beffa will spark fierce arguments behind the scenes. For Lyonnaise, the deal would lose much of its interest if Suez uses its cash pile as a sweetener for shareholders. Other difficulties also remain. Under the original plans, Jérôme Monod, the Lyonnaise chairman, was to head the new conglomerate, with Gérard Mestrallet, the chairman of Suez, becoming director-general. These plans are thought to be under negotiation.

The surge in sterling has also helped to keep the lid on factory-gate inflation, with the price of raw materials falling for the seventeenth month running, according to the CIPS survey. Manufacturers are also continuing to destock.

Economists said that the figures were unlikely to alter the outlook for rates — which are predicted to rise after the election. The Bank of England is likely to be concerned by the strong rise in domestic demand that has been the engine behind manufacturing growth in recent months. But Simon Briscoe, UK economist at Nikko Europa, said that the fall in employment suggested that manufacturers still believe the recovery is fragile and growth is only likely to continue at a moderate pace.

■ Growth in the housing market slowed slightly in February, according to data published by the British Bankers Association. Seasonally adjusted net lending figures rose £743 million, compared with £806 million in January. New approvals rose 9 per cent to 34,529 with the average value of approvals rising 10 per cent compared with January. But both figures were down on the 32 per cent rise in the number and value of transactions recorded a year ago.

Rate of output growth slows down

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY

THE manufacturing sector grew for a tenth successive month in March, although the rate of growth slowed to its lowest level since last summer as companies shed jobs to keep costs under control.

The Purchasing Managers Index fell from 53.4 in February to 52.9, although it was above the 50 points level that indicates the sector is growing.

The Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply (CIPS), which prepares the figures, said the slight decline was a result of the first drop in manufacturing employment for almost a year.

The strong pound is also holding back growth, with exports running at levels below those seen in the last quarter of 1996, although a pick-up in European markets led to a slight improvement in last month's export output figures.

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BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Newcastle United premium expected

SHARES in Newcastle United are expected to open at a modest 10p to 20p premium to the 135p flotation price when dealings begin today. At a market value of £193 million, however, Newcastle will be second only to Manchester United in terms of market value. Manchester is worth about £418 million on the stock market. Chelsea, number three in the financial league, is worth £189 million.

Proceeds from the Newcastle United float have been earmarked for reducing club debt, paying transfer fee instalments and boosting Newcastle's youth development scheme. Take-up from Newcastle fans proved so strong that the club was unable to give any of the 15 per cent tranche of the shares set aside for its retail offer to the public. Only applications from season ticketholders and other preferential groups, such as existing shareholders, were successful. The remaining 25 per cent has been taken up by institutional investors.

Sci back in the black

SCI ENTERTAINMENT, the video game producer, registered a pre-tax profit of £504,210 in the six months to December 31, compared with £1.6 million loss in the 16 months to June 30, 1996. The group turned round from a 15.67p loss per share to 3.54p of earnings, although there is no dividend. Jane Cavanagh, managing director, said: "I am delighted to announce this excellent first-half performance, following a highly respectable Christmas trading period. We are already excited about the prospects for our highly controversial racing game, Carmageddon, due out in May."

Heavy trading in Bre-X

SHARES of Bre-X, the gold mining company, opened briefly yesterday after their suspension on the Toronto stock market, but stopped trading because the exchange's computers could not handle the massive order flow. Eight million shares changed hands in the first half hour. The shares continued to trade in Montreal and Alberta and rose C\$1.35 to C\$3.85. Bre-X's shares collapsed last week on reports that its Indonesian mine may have far less gold than previously thought. The Canadian authorities are waiting for a full report on the size of the gold deposits before deciding on a full inquiry.

Olympic deal for SEA

SEA MULTIMEDIA registered net income before tax for 1996 of \$713,066, compared with a loss of \$342,888, on sales up from \$729,653 to \$3.9 million. There is no dividend, but earnings per share reached 3.30 cents from 1.87 cents of losses. SEA, listed on Aim, has signed an agreement with the International Olympic Committee for rights to publish multimedia products using Olympic logos until December 31, 2000. The company says that it will bring three or four games to the market during 1998. The company also believes that the multimedia market is at the start of an expansion phase.

Trial for cancer 'cure'

CORTecs INTERNATIONAL, the drug development company, hopes to start human trials next year of a new group of molecules that it says appear to be effective against cancer. Cortecs told a conference in Germany that in studies carried out with the CRC Centre for Cancer Therapeutics at the Royal Marsden Hospital the so-called Cetelom molecules had shown anti-tumour activity against ovarian, lung, colon and breast cancers. Cortecs said that in laboratory tests its lead compound inhibited the growth of human ovarian tumour without clinically observed toxic effects.

Pillar Property sale

PILLAR PROPERTY INVESTMENTS is raising about £18 million through the sale of a 100,000 sq ft office building in Bracknell, Berkshire, to the Teachers Insurance & Annuity Association, of America. The consideration for Mercury House, which is almost midway through a 25-year lease to Mercury Communications, represents a net initial yield of nearly 8 per cent. Pillar, which acquired the property in 1991, will redirect the proceeds of the disposal into further acquisitions in the retail sector.

Society offers jobs aid

NATIONWIDE Building Society is launching a job search service to help unemployed mortgage borrowers to return to work. The new service is part of Paymentguard, its mortgage protection product. The service would normally cost £100 and will be provided free to insured Nationwide customers who become unemployed. Nationwide said that with periods of unemployment lasting on average eight months, customers require not only financial assistance but practical help to find work.

Triplex Lloyd deal

TRIPLEX LLOYD, the UK specialist castings group, has acquired the business and assets of Feingusswerk Bochum, the German castings company, from Thyssen Guss AG, for an initial £6 million cash. Feingusswerk manufactures cast blades and vanes for turbine engines. An additional payment of about £3.6 million will become due if certain turnover targets are met within the next five years. Triplex said it would set up a subsidiary named TFB Feingusswerk Bochum GmbH to operate the business.

Yorkshire Water tax up

YORKSHIRE WATER'S tax charge is expected to be £6 million higher in the year to March 31 after its Yorkshire Water Services subsidiary entered into long-dated finance lease facilities totalling £265 million. The deals will raise the tax charge in the early years but this will be more than offset in the medium term by significant interest savings, which continue over the life of the facilities. The facilities have maturities of 25 and 35 years and form part of the financing of YWS's capital expenditure programme.

Engineering jobs warning as strong pound hits exports

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

THE engineering industry may have to cut jobs in a drive to stay competitive because the strength of sterling has hit its export performance.

The warning came after a marked deterioration in exports in the first three months of this year and amid fears that imports would further eat away at the UK industry.

The EEF, the grouping of engineering employers, highlighted the impact of sterling from a survey of more than 1,700 companies.

It showed a fall in the export order balance to -2 per cent in March compared with +9 per cent in December. The fall is only the second time in three years that a negative balance for orders has been recorded.

Graham Mackenzie, Director-General of the EEF, said: "If sterling remains at its current level there has to be a concern that export performance is further threatened and import penetration of the home market will rise, unless the UK industry can cut its cost base.

Last month, Vickers, the engineering group involved in the defence business and luxury cars, said that the strong pound would knock between £6 million and £7 million off its profits this year.

Engineering output in general has continued to grow although the pace has slowed, although the pace has slowed, according to a survey of new orders in March compared with 15 per cent in the previous three months.

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□ Election is the worry for UK shares □ City hirers want to close their chequebooks □ Bankers fret over EMU

□ WALL STREET bears managed to start a respectful Mexican wave round the global market stadium yesterday. New Zealand's index fell 1.3 per cent. Jakarta and Bangkok markets shared falls of 1.5 per cent. France and Belgium nearly doubled that, though Tokyo and Shanghai merely bowed from a seated position. Vienna and Copenhagen reckoned a drop of 2.6 per cent appropriate and in Warsaw seven stocks were down, six up and seven unchanged, leaving the average 2.8 per cent lower.

The global echo paid tribute to the power of American investment funds. What they can put in, they can take out. Even London fund managers know that any serious break in share prices across the Atlantic is likely to cause their American equivalents to pull back from what their clients perceive to be more risky non-American markets.

Turning points that are waiting to happen can easily be set off by a few traders exploiting thin holiday markets. Given the inter-day volatility of Wall Street in recent months, however, few yet presume that the Easter wave will turn into a summer trend.

At the turn of the year, market analysts on both sides of the Atlantic reckoned 1997 should be the first "down year" for shares since 1994. Equities had risen

ahead of profits and interest rates were destined to rise, at least in Britain and America. By mid-February, however, the Dow Jones average had gained a further 9 per cent. A month later, just before the election was declared, London's FTSE-100 was 8 per cent up in ten weeks. It is still 5 per cent ahead.

Since interest rate rises were supposedly factored into the markets' views, the favourite trigger for a correction was a slowdown in profit growth reported by American companies. After all, the Federal Reserve would have raised rates long ago had it not anticipated the economy slowing of its own accord.

The rising dollar (or pound) made this more likely.

That analysis may be too sophisticated. When the Fed's Alan Greenspan raised US rates by a quarter point, markets were initially relieved that he had finally done what everyone expected. But his caution has given ammunition to bears. If there is one rate rise, there must be more another in May, perhaps, and one more in the autumn. This is neither more nor less likely than

it was ten days ago, but remains the easy bet. People can understand trends.

There is even less new information in the London market, where ratings are still comfortably lower than New York. In London, however, election uncertainty has strangely failed to stay the hands of buyers. It will receive more attention now. Utility stocks are already weak. Nerves will surely now jangle over rises in corporation tax or cuts in pension funds' investment tax privileges.

Once you start worrying, there is plenty to worry about — but not, as yet, a crash.

Pay now, moan later

□ THERE was a time when few in the City would dream of sounding-off about pay and bonuses. One's word was one's bond, and one's salary was a matter for quiet reflection on the 4.58 pm to Colchester.

The new breed of investment banker is more outspoken on matters of remuneration: though

Re-enter the bankers. Sir John Craven, outgoing chairman of Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, says the City has degenerated into a friendless place, where mercenary instinct rules supreme. My word is my bond, but has a price.

Peter Middleton, boss of Salomon Brothers in Europe, accuses his competitors of paying more than they should for "pretty mediocre people". This from a man who has been brandishing the chequebook in an attempt to bolster the US group's local standing.

There is undoubtedly an element of hypocrisy in all this, but that is besides the point. The very fact that Middleton and his peers are willing to stand up and trumpet their views, suggests just how far the City has swung since Big Bang. Ten years ago, the pay cheques were flying just as fast, but with little of the fuss seen today. It took Black Monday and the onset of recession to bring the market down to earth.

Which leaves us where? Harder times will return, but something more may be needed. Firms such as Salomon are taking the lead in linking bonuses to performance, but share the blame in reaching deep in their pockets for the best talent.

Fear of poisoning by euro-banana

□ RISKS posed by "greedy and disloyal staff" now loom large among potential banana skins facing banks, according to the latest poll of bankers and their customers, regulators and analysts by the Centre for the Study of Financial Innovation.

When managers loathe people they pay vast sums to operate business they distrust, you can be sure the profits are vast. Weak-minded, complacent management again figures top of this annual storm-warning exercise, which comes too late for Nippon Credit Bank.

Leaping straight into the anxiety charts at number two comes a more surprising newcomer: Europe's monetary union. Only banks seem to be preparing for the euro. This could be the problem, especially for continental banks that assume it will start on the treaty date. Prepara-

tion is costing a packet, which may be irrecoverable if EMU heightens competition. Regional French and Italian banks may have little to offer wholesale markets if their own currency disappears and could lose valuable foreign exchange revenue.

Deals based on currencies converging could cause mayhem if EMU is delayed or cancelled, or if, for instance, the peseta or the lira is left out. What happens if EMU falters during the 1999-2002 transition, when banks have to assume founder currencies are interchangeable? If it goes ahead, there seems no way to cope with a market crisis if key states get into trouble.

In the UK, disaster is more likely, not just for banks, if a Blair government decides late to abolish sterling in 2002 and plump for the euro-banana.

Flight delay

□ AS EUROPE nominally opens its skies, the door remains closed on another long-impending deal. This week, British Airways and American Airlines were scheduled to go live with their super-alliance, but a deal is as far off as ever. Washington and London are unlikely to reach any decisions until June, and little will happen before October 30 when BA's winter season kicks in. If it happens at all.

Amstrad in value pledge to investors

By ERIC REGALY

AMSTRAD, the electronics group, plans to "return value" to shareholders in the wake of yesterday's sale of Dancall, its Danish mobile-phone subsidiary, to Robert Bosch of Germany for \$92 million.

Alan Sugar, Amstrad's chairman and controlling shareholder, would not provide details, but analysts and bankers said that a special dividend, a share buyback or a corporate reorganisation that might include the demerger of the group's remaining operations were possibilities. The share rose 21 1/2 p to 22 1/2 p.

Amstrad said that it sold Dancall because it had taken the company as far as it could and that an international powerhouse such as Bosch, with its technical expertise and global distribution capabilities, was realistically far better qualified to take Dancall forward.

Amstrad paid £6.3 million for Dancall in 1993 and invested a further £10 million to turn round the struggling company. The sale price repre-

sents a 600 per cent return on investment in less than four years.

Bosch, whose interests range from vehicle components to telecoms infrastructure, said that it was attracted to Dancall because it was the first mobile-phone company to launch a handset with full international roaming capability, allowing it to work in Europe and North America.

The company and its 600 employees in Denmark will be integrated into Bosch Telecom, the group's communications business.

A spokesman said that Bosch's goal was to expand Dancall to the point where it could compete with Motorola, Nokia and Ericsson, the mobile-phone leaders.

The Dancall sale almost doubles Amstrad's cash level to £200 million. Mr Sugar said that the company would reveal its plans to return value to shareholders in several months.

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Liberty to sell stake in Muji

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

LIBERTY, the stores and fabrics group, is selling its 49 per cent stake in Muji, the Japanese store chain, to Ryohin Keikaku, its joint venture partner, for £1.25 million.

Liberty will use the cash to help to pay for the redesign and refurbishment of the interior of its Regent Street store.

Denis Cassidy, chairman, said: "We have decided to dispose of our interest because our stated strategic priority is to focus on the development of the Regent Street flagship store, the building of the Liberty brand and its expansion in domestic and international markets."

Leases on three of the four existing Muji shops in London will be transferred. The Great Marlborough Street shop will revert to Liberty in a year's time.

Ryohin Keikaku is looking for a new West End site and plans to enlarge its existing stores and expand the chain. It wants to open about three stores a year in the UK and continental Europe.

Holland & Barrett up for sale

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

GEHE, the German pharmaceutical wholesale and retail company, intends to sell the Holland & Barrett health food shop chain and two other businesses belonging to Lloyds Chemists, which it acquired earlier this year for £684 million.

The other two businesses are National Veterinary Supplies and Martindales, a specialist pharmaceutical supplier. Altogether, the three are expected to fetch up to £250 million. Sales memorandums were sent out to potential bidders a fortnight ago.

AAH, Gehe's British wholesale arm, which is being merged with Lloyds, said: "The sale of these three will allow AAH to concentrate on its core activities."

Holland & Barrett has 400 branches and is Britain's largest health food retail chain. Interested buyers are believed to include General Nutrition Centre of the US and Allen Lloyd, the founding chairman of Lloyds Chemists.

Tadpole Technology suspends shares

TADPOLE TECHNOLOGY, the one-time wonder of the stock market that has seen its shares plunge from 440p to 20p over the past two years, yesterday suspended its listing on the Stock Exchange (Chris Ayres writes).

The company, which makes laptop computers, is expected to publish its annual report and accounts today.

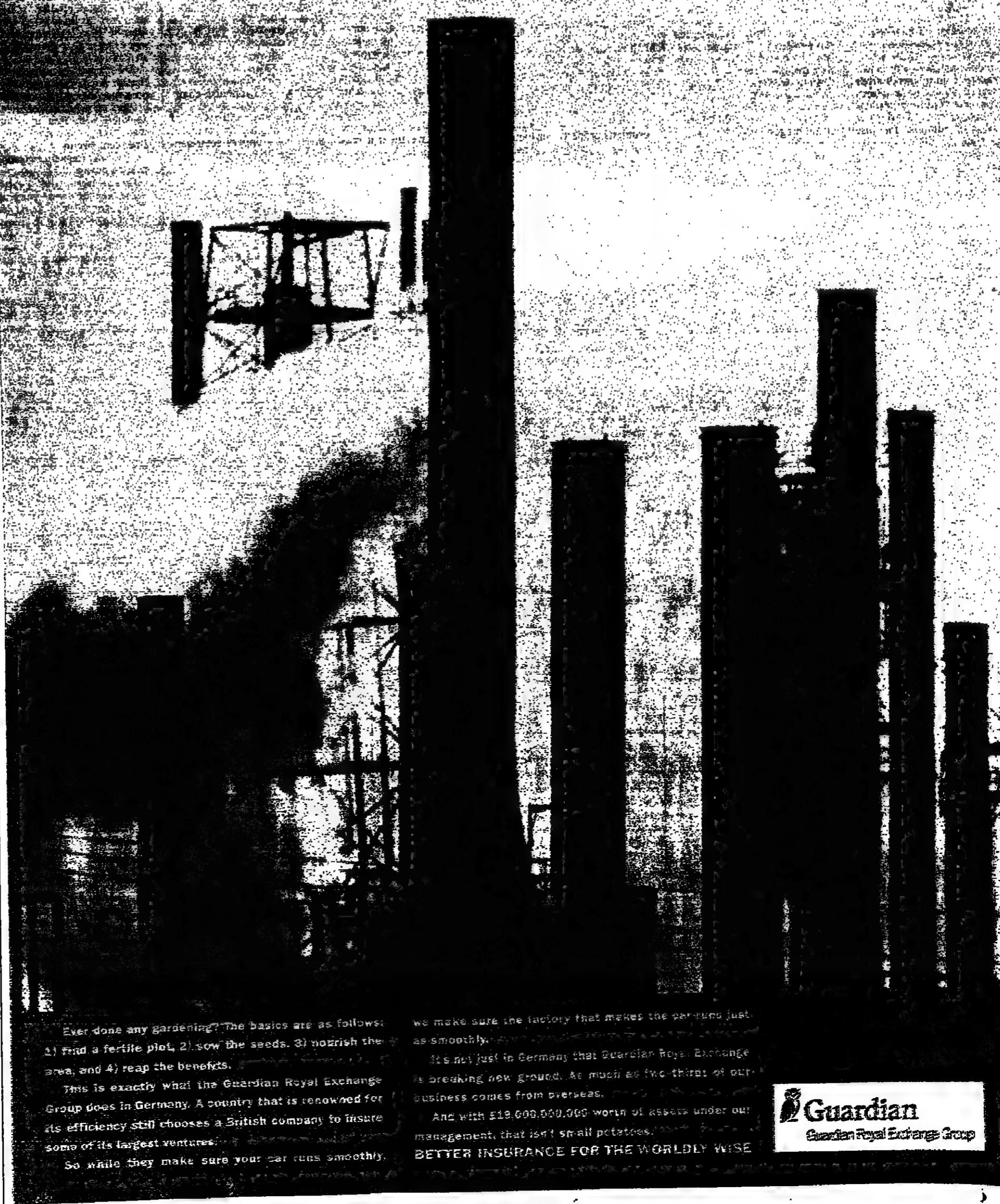
Bernard Hulme, who became chief executive of Tadpole when its founder George Grey resigned in July last

year, is believed to be looking for extra funding for the company.

Robert Booth, Tadpole's finance director, yesterday said the suspension was not related to a takeover or merger.

Last year, Tadpole incurred a pre-tax loss of £4.39 million, reduced from a loss of £9.9 million for the previous year. Sales were £23.95 million, down from £24.17 million, and there was a basic loss per share of 16.6p, compared with 38.7p for the previous year.

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Share slide stemmed but further falls are forecast

SHARE prices and government bonds took a pasting on the London stock market in the wake of heavy losses on Wall Street. The Dow Jones industrial average fell almost 300 points over the Easter period as worries about further rises in US interest rates unnerved investors.

Open short positions and the absence of any genuine selling pressure enabled the equity market in London to limit the losses, which were halved by the close. The FT-SE 100 index, down 112.4 at 4,200.5 first thing, closed 64.8 off at 4,248.1. Shares changing hands numbered a mere 654 million.

But traders remain cautious about the medium-term outlook for the London market. They say its closure on Friday insulated it from the full force of the shake-out on Wall Street, so that when trading resumed yesterday everyone was fully prepared.

Martin Lipton, head of market-making at Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, said: "I still expect the market to carry on down towards the 4,100 level. It will be lower in a month's time than it is now."

Richard Jeffrey, economist at Charterhouse, the merchant bank, takes a similar view.

"The US financial markets have begun to perceive that the tightening in US monetary policy might be greater than initially thought. He says further rises in interest rates are inevitable.

Leading shares were the worst hit. BOC Group dropped 14.4p to 941.1p, Shell fell 26p to £10.59 a share. Unilever was down 43.1p at £15.71. SmithKline Beecham lost 32.1p to 870.1p, and HSBC dropped 44.1p to £14.49.

Amstrad stood out with a jump of 21p to 221.1p after announcing the sale of its loss-making Dancall mobile telephone subsidiary to Bosch Telecom of Germany for £92 million.

Alan Sugar said Amstrad was now looking at the most efficient way of returning some of that cash to shareholders. Amstrad bought Dancall from the receivers for £7 million in 1993. Last year merger talks between Pion and Amstrad collapsed. Pion had been hoping to buy Dancall. Its failure left the shares 12.1p down at 41p.

Royal Bank of Scotland fell 13p to 524p after ABN Amro



Duncan Bain, left, and David Roberts of Bourne End, off 2p

Hoare Govett, the broker, urged clients to switch to Bank of Scotland, 2.1p easier at 318p.

There were few investors willing to celebrate the news that Vodafone has seen worldwide subscribers for its mobile phone network top four million for the first time. The price fell back 3p to 275.1p. By the end of March,

whispers claim Hammerson may now be considering a hostile bid for MEPC.

Elsewhere in the property sector, Bourne End Properties slipped 2p to 46p after reporting a sharp drop in profits and net assets. David Roberts has been appointed chief executive, replacing Leo Noe. He joined the board in 1995. Duncan Bain remains as finance director.

First-time dealings in Newcastle United are expected to get off to a healthy start after the issue was more than seven times oversubscribed at 15.1p.

Brokers are looking for a premium of around 10p to 15p. Charlton Athletic, the struggling south London Nationwide Division One side and recent newcomers to the market, slipped 1.1p to 12.1p.

Long-term bond yields rose 10 to 300p after seeing profits top £1 million for the first time.

□ GIILT-EDGED: The

London bond market suffered losses much in line with other overseas bond markets as investors began reacting to the setback for shares and bonds over the Easter period in New York. Prices opened sharply lower and spent much of the day bumping along the bottom before closing just above the day's low. The June series of the long gilt finished 6.4p lower at £1081.12 in moderate trading that saw 53,000 contracts completed.

Treasury 8 per cent 2015

shed 5.2p to finish at £1011.12, while among shorter-dated issues Treasury 8 per cent 2000 was off 1.4p at £1021.12.

□ NEW YORK: An attempt at a rally after the losses over two days passed out towards midday, when the Dow Jones industrial average was 9.82 points higher at 6,593.30.

ket, continued to lose ground, ending 2p cheaper at 621.1p. The shares were floated last month at 80p.

Nobo Group, the stationery supplier, advanced 17p to 124.1p after announcing it was in talks that might lead to a bid for the company. Nobo Group was forced to make this known because of the recent demand for the shares, which has seen the price rise from a low of 91.1p since last month.

Shares of Tadpole Technology, former high-flyer, were suspended at 23p 1/2 at the company's request pending publication of its annual report.

The notebook computer company reported worse than expected losses of £4.39 million in November.

Shares of the African Lakes Corporation were also suspended, at 48.1p — just 1p off the low for the year — at the company's request ahead of the annual report.

Avalon Oil managed to establish a premium in first-time trading despite the sharp losses recorded elsewhere in the equity market. Placed at 100p by Henderson Crosthwaite, the broker, it ended at 103.1p, a premium of 3.1p on the day.

The speculators continued to drive Somic sharply higher, with the price surging 72p to 159.1p. At these levels the group is capitalised at £3.13 million.

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In its latest survey of the transport sector Charterhouse Tilney, the broker, says its "underweight" stance may force clients to miss some gains. Top of its shopping list is British Airways, down 12.1p to 643p, along with P&O, down 7.1p to 61p. National Express, 13.1p off at 552p, and Ocean Group, 2p lighter at 523p.

the total number of subscribers in Britain had grown 415,000 to 2.87 million. A share buyback or special dividend were both mentioned as possible options.

MEPC, up 7.1p at 485p, has confirmed weekend reports that it has been in merger talks with rival Hammerson, up lighter at 431.1p, but said that the talks were called off several weeks ago. Market

speculators continued to drive Somic sharply higher, with the price surging 72p to 159.1p. At these levels the group is capitalised at £3.13 million.

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Elsewhere in the property sector, Bourne End Properties slipped 2p to 46p after reporting a sharp drop in profits and net assets. David Roberts has been appointed chief executive, replacing Leo Noe. He joined the board in 1995. Duncan Bain remains as finance director.

First-time dealings in Newcastle United are expected to get off to a healthy start after the issue was more than seven times oversubscribed at 15.1p.

Brokers are looking for a premium of around 10p to 15p. Charlton Athletic, the struggling south London Nationwide Division One side and recent newcomers to the market, slipped 1.1p to 12.1p.

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Long-term bond yields rose 10 to 300p after seeing profits top £1 million for the first time.

□ GIILT-EDGED: The

London bond market suffered losses much in line with other overseas bond markets as investors began reacting to the setback for shares and bonds over the Easter period in New York. Prices opened sharply lower and spent much of the day bumping along the bottom before closing just above the day's low. The June series of the long gilt finished 6.4p lower at £1081.12 in moderate trading that saw 53,000 contracts completed.

Treasury 8 per cent 2015

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industrial average was 9.82 points higher at 6,593.30.

Hoare Govett, the broker, urged clients to switch to Bank of Scotland, 2.1p easier at 318p.

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Lufthansa-Bombardier link for new jet service

BY JON ASHWORTH

BOMBARDIER, the Canadian aerospace-to-snowmobiles group, has teamed up with Lufthansa CityLine to create a new corporate jet charter company. European Business Jet Services, based at Berlin-Schoenfeld airport, will begin operations in the autumn.

Keith Bonson, UK sales manager for Emirates, the Middle Eastern carrier, has been appointed co-managing director of the new venture, the first of its kind in Europe between an airline and an aircraft manufacturer. Mr Bonson will also be responsible for sales and

marketing. He will be based in Germany. The service is aimed at businessmen with dealings in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Learjets and Challengers supplied by Bombardier will perform round trips, thus avoiding questionable maintenance or tainted fuel supplies. The service will be linked to Lufthansa's Amadeus centralised computer system.

Bombardier has supplied Lufthansa with Canadian Regional Jets, and was impressed by the airline's extensive East European network. Michael Graff, president of Bombardier Business Aircraft, said reaction from potential

customers had been good. He said: "We will use customer aircraft currently in operation but which are not being utilised to their full potential."

Bombardier recently announced net income, before exceptional, of C\$406 million (5180 million) for the year to January 31, on revenues of C\$8 billion. A write-down on Bombardier's investment in Eurotel left net income for the year at C\$158 million.

Flight testing is continuing on the Bombardier Global Express, a new long-range corporate jet that features components built by Short Brothers in Belfast, BMW, Rolls-Royce and

Lucas Aerospace are among companies to back the aircraft, which will cover 6,700 nautical miles at a cruising speed of Mach 0.80. It is competing for orders with the Gulfstream GV, which has similar specifications and is about 12 months ahead in terms of testing and production.

Bombardier has expanded aggressively in the past decade to become the world's fourth largest civil aircraft manufacturer. The aerospace division encompasses four famous aviation names: Canadair and de Havilland in Canada, Learjet in America, and Short Brothers in Belfast.

EU completes air travel deregulation programme

BY HARVEY ELLIOTT
AIR CORRESPONDENT

HOPES of cheaper European air fares are unlikely to be realised quickly in spite of yesterday's final deregulation of air travel within the European Union.

Any airline can now operate any route it wishes, including internal domestic services, free from bureaucratic interference. But even the most optimistic and competitive British carriers believe it will be years, if at all, before new low-cost airlines are competing alongside the national giants and forcing down fares.

A shortage of airport space plus high landing fees and other costs will make it impossible for newcomers to break into the market at Europe's key hub airports, it is believed.

Sir Michael Bishop, chairman of British Midland, said: "My view is that there will inevitably be a feeling of anti-climax among many outside the industry who may be expecting cataclysmic change."

His airline has been at the forefront of the ten-year battle to get greater liberalisation of air travel within Europe, but he now fears that the continuing state aid to airlines and airports will effectively snuff out competition. He added: "There will be attempts to neutralise the impact of the new order. European travellers will be watching to ensure that the reality and the spirit of change is enforced."

There are now 150 scheduled airlines within Europe carrying more than 700 million passengers a year. Air fares generally are up to twice as high as for similar dis-



Sir Michael Bishop, British Midland chairman, fears continuing state aid will effectively snuff out competition

tances flown within the US. The liberalisation process that culminated in yesterday's final unshackling of the industry took more than a decade to reach its conclusion, spread between three fiercely negotiated packages of measures.

Domestic air fares in countries with especially high fares and an inefficient airline industry may prove the most tempting to low-cost carriers

such as EasyJet. Stelios Haji-Ioannou, who started the cut-price airline on British domestic routes from Luton, is now planning to open a series of services within Greece.

But he will have to choose said "underfunded" airports rather than the main hubs to obtain the right slots. He said: "There is no regulation at the big airports such as Frankfurt. But small low-cost airlines like

mine would be well advised to steer clear of them anyway and to concentrate instead on secondary airports as we have done at Luton."

Greece is the obvious candidate for competition to be introduced because alone of countries within the Community it has just one large inefficient carrier on its domestic service. But there are others which we are investi-

gating as possible places for expansion in the future."

Meanwhile, British Airways is determined to carry on with its policy of offering franchises to small European carriers and Britannia, Britain's biggest charter airline, will concentrate on the British market which, it says, it knows best.

Pennington, page 27

Bourne End Properties sees 35% decline

BY CHRIS AYRES

BOURNE END Properties, the retail and office property company, yesterday reported a 35.7 per cent fall in pre-tax profits, from £1.04 million to £666,000, for the year ended December 31.

Net asset value also fell, from 81.2p to 69.2p, because of a 5 per cent drop in the value of the company's investment portfolio.

The results coincide with a management shake-up that sees David Roberts replace Leo Nee as chief executive. Mr Nee will keep a seat on the board as a non-executive director.

Meanwhile, Don Hughes, the chairman, has decided to retire and the company is now looking for an external replacement.

The new management is expected to continue the company's move away from the secondary retail market to concentrate on large shopping centres.

The company yesterday announced its acquisition of the 250,000 sq ft Clock Towers shopping centre in Rugby for £10.5 million.

It has also recently bought the prestigious Waverley Shopping Centre in Edinburgh city centre.

Bourne End, which owns 74 properties at present, now earns more than 85 per cent of its income from national companies, including Argos, Littlewoods, Mothercare, John Menzies and Iceland.

The company said yesterday that a dividend of 6.65p would be paid on July 3, which means the total year dividend will be maintained at 1.2p.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

R-R \$240m deal with Continental Airlines

ROLLS-ROYCE has struck a deal with Continental Airlines worth up to \$240 million for engines to power Boeing 757 aircraft. The contract for engines for up to 16 extra aircraft, which would mean, if all options were exercised, that Continental would have 41 Rolls-Royce-powered 757s. The deal, which includes an eight-year repair and overhaul agreement, strengthens Rolls-Royce's already dominant position in the 757 market. Continental Airlines has also agreed to buy \$45 million in spare engines from Rolls-Royce. Rolls-Royce said the engine for Continental's 757s — the RB211-535 — was chosen because of reliability and potential for saving costs.

The company is currently working to resolve problems with its RB211-524, a separate family of engines that power 747-400 aircraft. It has been in talks with a number of airlines to repair the engines that have developed faults with their blades. The company is discussing replacing parts of the engines with those from its Trent family.

Nobo bid approach

NOBO, the office equipment group based in Sussex, said yesterday it had received a bid approach that "may or may not" lead to an offer being made for the company. Nobo shares rose 17p to 127.5p, which values the business at nearly £23 million. The company declined to identify the potential bidder and said a further announcement would be made "as soon as practicable". Last year, Nobo lifted its pre-tax profits 8 per cent from £2.7m to £2.93 million, on sales of £50.2 million (£40.5 million).

Reunion incurs loss

REUNION MINING registered a loss of £3.7 million in the year to end December, equal to a loss per share of 10.6p, a fall on the 6.0p loss per share in the previous year and the £1.9 million pre-tax loss. Reunion also said that a feasibility study on the Skorpion zinc deposit in Southern Namibia had now commenced. The result of a full study is expected by the middle of 1998, although the development of a mining operation would take about two years, putting the start of production in the latter half of the year 2000. The shares rose 12.5p to 128p.

Arcadian in hotel deal

ARCADIAN INTERNATIONAL, the hotels and property development company, announced joint-venture arrangements for the redevelopment of the Great Eastern Hotel at Liverpool Street in London. The company will take a 125-year lease of the hotel from British Land, which has a similar agreement with Railtrack. British Land will provide £30 million of funding towards Great Eastern's redevelopment costs. Arcadian said: "The hotel will close for a £43 million redevelopment this month. It is due to reopen in 1999."

Vodafone users increase

VODAFONE, which is the biggest mobile telephone operator in the UK, now has more than four million worldwide subscribers. The company said its customer base grew by 97,000 in the year to March 31, while in the UK the subscriber base was more than 2.87 million, up 415,000 in the current financial year. Chris Gent, Vodafone's chief executive, said: "In the UK Vodafone remains the market leader both in turnover and in numbers of subscribers."

Tuskar's African deal

TUSKAR RESOURCES, the Dublin oil and gas exploration and production company, announced yesterday that it had signed a memorandum of understanding with Camac International (Nigeria) to acquire its net production revenue interest in the Ukpokpo field, located offshore Nigeria. Tuskar Resources said the consideration will be met through the issue of ordinary shares in the company at a price to be negotiated on completion of an independent valuation.

Premiere expands

Premiere, the education and business training group, raised pre-tax profits from £408,000 to £792,000 in the year to December 31. Earnings per share rose from 13p to 16.5p, out of which a maiden dividend of 4p will be paid. Dorian Marks, joint managing director, said: "The year was one of satisfying success and 1997 has started with turnover ahead of budget and further advances in profitability achieved." The company continued to expand, with branches in Leeds and Warrington.

Insurance joint venture

LAMBERT FENCHURCH, the insurance broker, has formed a German general insurance joint venture with Pantaenius, for £1.67 million plus the share capital of Lowndes Lambert Deutschland. Pantaenius is based in Hamburg and has offices in Dusseldorf, Munich and Monaco. Lambert Fenchurch will acquire 40 per cent of Pantaenius, whose yacht insurance broking company will remain wholly under Harald Baum, its chairman.

Gaskell advances

GASKELL, the floor coverings group, raised pre-tax profits from £807,000 to £1.2 million last year on sales up from £39.1 million to £43.7 million. Earnings rose from 11.4p to 16.4p, allowing the total dividend to rise from 4.5p to 4.8p after a rise in the final from 3.0p to 3.2p. The company said that despite the current political and economic uncertainties it was confident that the group had established a solid foundation from which to achieve further profitable growth in the future.

Go-ahead for \$16.5bn 'Baby Bell' merger

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

APPROVAL by the California Public Utilities Commission has allowed the \$16.5 billion merger between SBC Communications and Pacific Telesis Group to go ahead. The boards of the two companies finally voted the deal through.

The merger creates America's largest provider of local telephone services, with a territory that stretches from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean and with annual revenues of \$23.5 billion.

SBC, however, agreed to the California regulators demand that it issue refunds

totalling \$341 million to California consumers over a five-year period, beginning in 1998, to cover a portion of the short-term and long-term benefits of the merger.

The annual revenue of \$23.5 billion ranks the new group among the top 30 publicly held American corporations on the Fortune 500.

Edward Whitacre, SBC's chairman and chief executive officer, said: "Growth prospects for our business are outstanding. Exploding demand for Internet access and high-speed data services, strong growth in wireless

services, increased demand for basic wireline service and tremendous opportunities in long-distance and in markets outside the United States, all point to an exciting future for the new SBC."

The merger of the two "Baby Bell" companies, however, has met with stiff criticism from consumer groups and rival telephone companies, which argue that the combination of the two will slow the opening up of local exchange markets to competition.

On prospects Roger Boissier, the chairman, said: "The confidence that I expressed in my year-end statement is maintained."

Telephone bill, page 28

Pressac plans f8m takeover in America

PRESSAC, the electrical and electronic component specialist, raised pre-tax profits 28 per cent to £2.9 million in the six months to January 31 on sales up 15 per cent to £36.1 million. Earnings rose 30 per cent to 4.96p, allowing the interim dividend to increase 11 per cent to 1.10p.

The group announced an £8.8 million cash deal to take over the American Kaumagraph Flint Corporation, which it said would expand its plastic graphics car components business in North America.

On prospects Roger Boissier, the chairman, said: "The confidence that I expressed in my year-end statement is maintained."

US woes help to push Telematrix into the red

BY CHRIS AYRES

AN OVERAMBITIOUS acquisition and a lack of control over US operations are to blame for Telematrix's plunge into the red in 1996, according to senior management.

The semiconductor manufacturer, which owns just over half of GTI corporation in America, yesterday reported losses of £6.9 million for the year to December 31, compared with profits of £10.4 million in 1995. Losses were 4.2p a share, against earnings of 5.3p.

Tim Curtis, Telematrix's chief executive, said that GTI's purchase of Promptus, the US video conferencing specialist, was mainly to blame. He added: "It hasn't worked out. It was a level of commitment above us. We also don't have full management of GTI, which has caused problems."

Telematrix has signed an agreement to sell Promptus to

the office of the US attorney general, which is investigating the company's actions.

Mr Curtis said: "The problem is that the creditors are being paid off before the shareholders. If we had been able to do that, we would have been able to pay off the shareholders before the creditors. We have been able to do that, but the shareholders have not been paid off.

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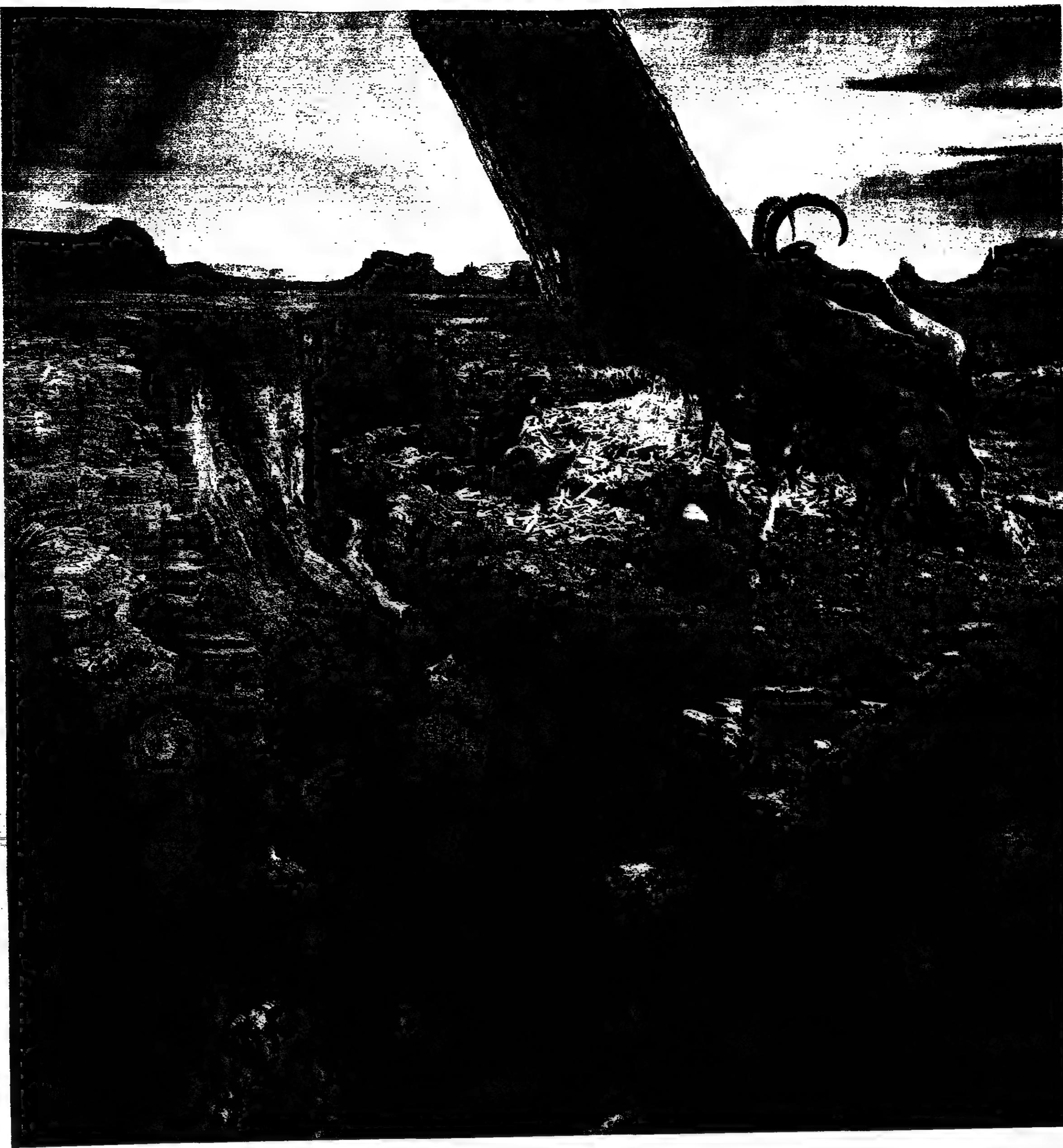
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FORTIS ON THE LOOKOUT FOR CHALLENGES

In 1989 Fortis didn't even exist. Now it is one of the world's largest financial service groups, with operations throughout the whole field of banking, insurance and investments. It is not simply the sum of many parts but a successful whole, combining strengths such as know-how and resources. At the same time each of the more than 100 Fortis companies - including such familiar names as AG 1824, ASLK-CGER, AMEV and VSB - has the freedom to operate in its own market in its own way.

This has created a climate where different national and business cultures are seen not as obstacles but as advantages. At the same time it allows individual Fortis companies to build upon already strong positions.

This has been the Fortis strategy up to now. And given its success, we believe it makes sense to continue this strategy. Today Fortis markets a wide range of products in western Europe,

the United States and Australia. But our ambitions do not end there. They extend much further.

That is why the Fortis companies are working to grow internally, enthusiastically drawing on each other's knowledge and experience.

It is also our policy to pursue possible acquisitions. Fortis is strong enough financially to make the most of every opportunity provided such acquisitions will soon be contributing to profits.

This focused growth policy is designed to ensure that Fortis maintains its impressive record of profitability and growth. It should make it possible to continue achieving targets such as a 12% minimum yield, even in the future. Over 30,000 employees around the world are ready for the challenge.

For more information please call: 31 (0) 30 257 6549 (NL),
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■ FILM

From 'natural born killer' to king of porn, Woody Harrelson has no qualms about his new image

■ THEATRE

Steve Livermore's disappointing new play *Skank* charts a day in the life of six East London delinquents

THE TIMES ARTS

■ RISING STAR

Two years after leaving university David Eldridge has two plays behind him and a third in the West End

■ TOMORROW

Colin Firth stars as the obsessed Arsenal fan in the week's big new cinema release, *Fever Pitch*

PETER NICHOLLS

Nice guy in a dirty business

CINEMA: Carol Allen talks to Woody Harrelson about his transition from goofy barman to the porn king Larry Flynt

According to Woody Harrelson, who plays him in the forthcoming film *The People vs Larry Flynt*, America's most infamous pornographer is "a really likeable guy with a great sense of humour".

Larry Flynt is the Kentucky redneck strip-club owner who founded the raunchy *Hustler* magazine in the 1970s, and eventually took his right to publish it to the Supreme Court of the United States. It was a publication which brought Flynt into constant conflict with the obscenity laws, resulted in his being gurned down and left wheelchair-bound during one of those obscenity trials, and ultimately cast him as the unlikely champion of free speech through his successful appeal to the Supreme Court under the First Amendment to the US Constitution.

Flynt was also a womaniser, despite his devotion to his equally promiscuous fourth wife, Althea, with whom he also indulged in drug abuse. And he became notorious for his flamboyant and disrespectful courtroom antics involving the American flag. "There are

a lot of rags-to-riches stories but none really quite like his. It's a uniquely American story in a way," Harrelson says, then laughs as he realises the implications of his remark.

Not surprisingly, Milos Forman's film, which opens in Britain next week, has created controversy, not just in terms of opposition from the right-wing moralists with whom Flynt did battle, but also from the Left, most particularly the feminist writer Gloria Steinem, who has protested that the film sanitizes Flynt as a genial rascal, rather than showing him as a sleazy exploiter of female flesh.

Also not surprisingly, Harrelson denies these accusations. "I don't think it makes him a hero. Everything our society could possibly say negatively about somebody, it depicts in the movie. It portrays him very accurately. I think there are a lot of people who have probably decided that they don't want to see it no matter how good anyone says it is, and that is unfortunate because they're missing a great movie."

Before filming began, Harrelson spent a lot of time with Flynt, questioning him closely

about his life — including his first sexual experience. "It was actually with a chicken! Not the farm animal I would have picked, but you have to give him credit for being honest about that. He's a very candid guy, you know. That's something I might well have kept quiet about."

In his own persona, Harrelson demonstrates much of the candour and charm with which he makes the character of Flynt palatable on screen. Though his thumping hair is cut close to his skull, those wide blue eyes, the reassuringly homely country drawl and big sunny grin are unchanged from the days when he played his lovable and naive namesake in the hit television series *Cheers*.

He also demonstrates an appealing modesty. When asked why Forman chose him for the role, he says: "Milos said, 'Bring me the most white trash actor in Hollywood', so here I am."

It was that "poor white trash" quality that Oliver Stone (who was co-producer of *The People vs Larry Flynt*) used so effectively in another controversial movie, *Natural Born Killers*. In Stone's film, Harrelson's appealing image was again exploited in an effort to make an unpalatable character and story acceptable to a wider public. Though here, too, Harrelson argues

that the film was misunderstood by many people. "We saw it as a dark, over-the-top satirical comedy," he explains.

However, it is interesting to note the number of other less than admirable characters he has played since *Cheers*: the yuppie husband who sells a night with his wife in *Indecent Proposal*; the transit cop turned robber in *The Money Train*; and the self-satisfied kidnapped doctor in Michael Cimino's recent New Age flop *The Sunchaser*. So were these deliberate career choices to get away from the lovable Woody image, or has he been the object of producers making calculated casting decisions to improve the appeal of difficult characters?

"Maybe both," he says. "I kind of take things as they come and like to do different things. I don't think of it as a big effort to get away from Woody. I wouldn't mind playing a simple, loving character again. And certainly it could be argued that, with each successive role, it looks like I've been trying to erode

what's left of my fan base from the *Cheers* days."

Easy though it would be to take Harrelson's candid and sunny manner at face value, there is a darker side to his life.

Born in Texas 35 years ago, Harrelson and his two broth-

ers were raised in their mother's home.

However, all that appears to be behind him now, in favour of a simple, rather New Age lifestyle with his partner Laura and their two young daughters. Home, when he is not filming, is a four-roomed house in Costa Rica. Wherever he is in the world, he never misses his daily yoga session.

The New Age Harrelson also likes to dress in natural fibres, with a preference for hemp — though as he proudly draws attention to his Armani hemp jacket, you tend to think this is the simple life with a distinctly well-heeled slant.

And though he has gone over to a largely vegan diet, he is still no party pooper when he meets up occasionally with old chums from *Cheers* days. "I tip the odd pint, Guinness is my beverage of choice."

Although Harrelson would like to spend more time indulging his love of music with his sometime band — "a cross between folk, rock 'n' roll, rockabilly, rhythm and blues and country, with a little bit of jazz in there too" — for the moment he has a full slate of films coming up. Last summer he played an American journalist in Michael Winterbottom's *Welcome to Sarajevo*, loosely based on ITN journalist Michael Nicholson's book. He recently completed a supporting role in David Mamet and Barry Levinson's *Wag the Dog* — "It's a political satire, so that, too, will probably be misunderstood," he jokes. And this month he starts work on a new film by Volker Schlöndorff.

Although he bears with equanimity the fact that he failed to add an Oscar to his Golden Globe for *Larry Flynt* — he correctly forecast that the award would go to Geoffrey Rush — he does have one regret about last month's event. He turned down a role in *The English Patient*.

"They sent me that script and I just didn't get it. I just couldn't see what the movie was going to do. I really bombed out over that."

• *The People vs Larry Flynt* opens in Britain on April 11

Bartender, serial killer and now peddler of female flesh: Woody Harrelson, star of the soon-to-be-released *The People vs Larry Flynt*, has played them all in his acting career

THEATRE: Steve Livermore's new play; plus mime

Drugs, squalor, no big deal

STEVE LIVERMORE has devoured Irvine Welsh's collected works and regurgitated his own version of *Trainspotting* on stage.

Set in and around a tower block on an East London estate, the play charts a day in the life of six average delinquents: 500 pills, one used 1950s villain and a children's clown called Kevin. Livermore leads the light brigade himself. He plays a small-time drug dealer, Dave, who has to gather an impossible amount of money to repay a loan shark, apparently modelled on Ronnie Kray. Muttering vague threats into a mobile phone, the writer, producer and director shuffles around the bare stage in his flimsy trainers like a sh

IF YOU want to make physical theatre, one of your first moves is likely to be an inquiry at the door of the esteemed French mime teacher Jacques Lecouq. The members of Hopoloi Theatre have beaten a path to Paris, and are now applying Lecouq's principles in this country.

Perhaps the most difficult bridge to build is that between the skills of the body and the more elusive crafts of storytelling and dramatisation. With *Honesty*, the company gets about halfway across. Paul, played by Simon Dale-Jones, takes a room in an apartment block. Three other performers play a variety of oddball characters: landlord, cleaning lady, other tenants in the building. Paul is initially unable to find his room in the maze of corridors. When he does, it dematerialises amid a swirl of encounters with these peculiar residents.

Skank
Old Red Lion, EC1

sixth-former who would rather be elsewhere.

The rest of the cast can only shine by comparison. Back in the tower block, mad Colin and oblivious Bill get drunk on vodka and crazy on pills. Andy, our narrator and Dave's flatmate, tries to give a story from this detritus, like Renton in the film version of *Trainspotting*. His most significant contribution to the plot, however, is to have his nose broken by Russell Levys's amusing hit man, Gas.

Livermore's one kernel of inspiration comes, predictably, at the end, in a bout of

creative desperation to find a finale to his play, he turns Gas into a clown-loving psychopath who manages to blow his own head off in a juggling routine. If the company had taken all their cues from this moment of infectious lunacy, *Skank* might have strayed into the surreal and wonderful realm of *The People Show*. The young actors of Trust Theatre Company, all graduates of East 15, at least have one thing on their side: Time.

The programme says that a main aim of this production (let's face it, the only aim) is to try to create enough interest in *Skank* to turn it into a film. In your dreams.

JAMES CHRISTOPHER

when these thin corners are turned back to their positions at the start of the show, suggesting the ridges of the apartment block's roof. Paul's natural home is on top of the building rather than inside it, and the final image seems like a nod to the closing scene of *Delicatessen*, the splendidly eccentric French film which ends with the protagonist playing his saw like a cello on the roof at night.

Stefanie Müller, who also performs, provides a nicely minimalist set: three tall right angles which, when standing, suggest a warren of doors and corridors and give the performers just enough space to hide and change behind. There is a neat shift at the end

Body building
Honesty
Young Vic Studio

There are wisps of Kafka here, but the performers never quite home in on them, preoccupied with creating caricatures rather than developing content. Lecouq teaches that less is more. Living up to this dictum is some task.

Stefanie Müller, who also

shares *Delicatessen* a nose for the absurd, without following it to the logically grotesque or existential conclusions. The programme suggests that the company took the words "lethargy, obsession and voyeurism" as their starting points, along with the apartment block. The dwelling is suitably evoked, but there is a curious timidity about the rest.

Stefanie Müller, who also

GREAT BRITISH HOPES

Rising stars in the arts firmament

DAVID ELDREDGE

Age: 23

Profession: Playwright

Rapid progress: Less than two years after graduating from Exeter University with a degree in drama and English, Eldridge has a play staged in the West End. *Summer Begins* (at the Donmar Warehouse until Saturday) follows the 1996 Bush production of his debut, *Serving It Up*, praised by critics for "confident theatricality" and "verbal swagger".

What's the story? *Summer Begins* follows a month in the lives of four working-class twentysomethings from Barking: two sisters and their respective boyfriends. "It's a character-led play about the ordinariness of life in the suburbs."

Write about what you know: His plays are all set in familiar territory. "I grew up in Romford, which is close to Barking, and *Serving It Up* takes place on a council estate in Hackney, which is where my parents come from." His *A Week with Tony*, also seen on the London fringe last year, features upper-middle-class Tories not unlike the people Eldridge studied with as a scholar at an Essex private school.

Why did he start writing? "When I arrived at Exeter, I was gagging to be a director. But I realised there were things I wanted to say that I couldn't express by interpreting someone else's work."

Mentor: Peter Thomson, professor of drama at Exeter, has a great passion for new writing and encouraged me to send *Serving It Up* to London theatres, including the Bush."

Influences and heroes: "Philip Larkin's ideas about the impossibility of marriage struck a chord that I want to explore. I admire David Hare for his massive sweep, and Trevor Griffiths for combining the epic with gritty detail."

Does he keep a close watch on directors? "You hear of writers who get in the way during rehearsals, but I don't. The writer should just be a source of information and support."

Coming soon: He is already revising play number four, provisionally titled *Cold Fallen Heart*, which explores the relationship between an electrician and a social worker. His first film script is also under way. "It's called *The Tall Boy*, but I don't want to say anything about it yet."

DANIEL ROSENTHAL

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Othello 1520



■ POP

In Dublin, several thousand happily mortgaged thirtysomethings go crazy for the Beautiful South



■ CHOICE 1

Alan Howard offers a rare live performance of the writings of Homer

VENUE: From tonight at the Tricycle, NW6

THE TIMES ARTS



■ CHOICE 2

Ben Elton's new comedy *Popcorn* opens its West End run

VENUE: Tonight at the Apollo Theatre

■ CHOICE 3

Pianist Richard Clayderman gives his only Scottish concert in Glasgow

VENUE: Tonight at the Royal Concert Hall

POP: While the fans go wild in Dublin, in Glasgow they stay pretty unmoved



Musical chairs: they can't dance, they look dour, so the secret of Beautiful South's success must be their supremely polished, adult pop songs

Despite being a long-time admirer of Paul Heaton, I have to admit that there are occasions when I gasp in amazement at the sheer scale of the Beautiful South's popularity.

One such moment was on hearing the news that their greatest hit collection, *Carry On Up The Charts*, had sold more than two million copies in Britain alone. Another was observing several thousand happily mortgaged thirty-something suburbanites screaming stagehands in adoration or indulging in mass arm-waving during *The Sound of North America* – which is not even a "greatest hit" but an album track.

It's not that their music is without merit – far from it – but Heaton's lyrics always struck me as a little too self-consciously clever and know-

It's all in the eye of the beholder

ing ever to compete on a commercial level with the likes of Oasis and Celine Dion. I was wrong.

The teenybopper-style hysteria is just as puzzling. Jacqueline Abbott, dressed in a black leather trenchcoat and sensible trousers, is demure and unaffectedly shy. One gets the impression that she would feel uncomfortable singing a song at her best friend's birthday party, never mind in the UK's largest pop venues – which is where she's heading.

The Beautiful South The Point, Dublin

And she can't dance, so a career as the sixth Spice Girl looks unlikely.

Nor are the male vocalists in the band likely to upset Boyzone's wall calendar sales. Dave Hemingway wore a bright orange raincoat and a black woolly hat. Blue was the colour of Heaton's winter coat, and he wore runners as

white as washing powder... So the secret of their success must be in the songs. The instantly hummable *We Are Each Other*, which opened the show, or the incurably catchy *You Keep It All In* seemed to suggest as much.

Indeed, the Beautiful South make supremely polished, adult pop music that, the odd swear word notwithstanding, is ostensibly tailor-made for daytime radio. But there's no getting away from Heaton's barbed lyrics. The sly immu-

do and bawdy sexual metaphors of the disgruntled prostitute in *Mirror*, for example, would not one would imagine, be to everyone's taste, and yet one of the main criticisms levelled at the Beautiful South is that they're too tasteless. Personally, I preferred Heaton when he played the Christian socialist card in the Housemartins, a band who never overdoes it on irony and smart wordplay.

Indeed, the highlight of the set was arguably his stirring version of *Lean on Me*, where Heaton's yearning, mournful falsetto evoked the spirit of the great Smokey Robinson.

And to be honest, despite the use of occasional video clips, the show definitely lacked something as a spectacle. But those screaming thirty-somethings would disagree.

NICK KELLY

Impeccably cool street credentials

Fun Lovin' Criminals Glasgow Barrowland

The *Fun Lovin' Criminals* have jobs as bouncers and bartenders in various hip New York clubs. Which might explain why they seem to be playing much of their Glasgow set on Friday to some smoky late-night basement rather than a cavernous hall packed with 2,000 rock fans. Huey's rasping monologues were only half audible at the best of times, while the music remained a trifle too intimate and downbeat to project very far across the vast Barrowland ballroom.

While such minor problems could easily be corrected with a fuller sound and a dash more showmanship, the Criminals also seemed to exhaust their

repertoire of musical tricks not long into the evening. Following the thunderous, trumpet-driven romp of their theme song, *The Time in the World*, Huey's guitar was an understated shimmer, his vocal a softly growled homage to the sublime Louis Armstrong original. As the applause died down, he rewarded himself by swigging from a bottle of champagne with all the swaggering panache of a victorious prize-fighter.

Thus the *Fun Lovin' Criminals* eventually acquitted themselves in Glasgow. But as to whether such uneven flashes of brilliance constitute a truly great show, the jury is still out.

STEPHEN DALTON

NEW YORK trio the Fun Lovin' Criminals make music as smooth as their impeccably cool, cartoon-gangster image. Their rough-hewn singer Huey is a former juvenile offender and US Marine who, for reasons of his own, keeps his surname a strict secret. Though born of Irish and Puerto Rican blood, Huey has the look and mannerisms of a young Robert De Niro, rapping his comical fables of Manhattan streetlife over the catchily cocktails of funk, jazz and 1970s hard rock which form the core of the band's excellent debut album *Come Find Yourself*.

According to their carefully manicured personal mythology, this dapper threesome graduated to performing

via jobs as bouncers and bartenders in various hip New York clubs. Which might explain why they seem to be playing much of their Glasgow set on Friday to some smoky late-night basement rather than a cavernous hall packed with 2,000 rock fans. Huey's rasping monologues were only half audible at the best of times, while the music remained a trifle too intimate and downbeat to project very far across the vast Barrowland ballroom.

While such minor problems could easily be corrected with a fuller sound and a dash more showmanship, the Criminals also seemed to exhaust their

ceived, but the warmest reaction of the night went to a beautifully measured cover version of John Barry's elegant James Bond theme, *We Have All the Time in the World*. Huey's guitar was an understated shimmer, his vocal a softly growled homage to the sublime Louis Armstrong original. As the applause died down, he rewarded himself by swigging from a bottle of champagne with all the swaggering panache of a victorious prize-fighter.

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STEPHEN DALTON

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■ FESTIVALS

From an exhibition of works by the late Derek Jarman in Thessaloniki, Cultural Capital of Europe ...



■ FESTIVALS

... and Marianne Faithfull singing to the faithful at Bergen's international bash in Norway ...

THE TIMES ARTS



■ FESTIVALS

... to Riccardo Muti joining the musical contingent on hand for the festivities in Vienna ...



■ FESTIVALS

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APRIL

Thessaloniki, Cultural Capital of Europe '97: The Greek Byzantine port presents a *Festival of Ideas*, incorporating music, theatre, literature, painting, sculpture, cinema and dance. An international programme includes exhibitions of works by Caravaggio, Michelangelo, Goya and Derek Jarman. Artists include the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, Beijing Opera, Kyoto Symphony Orchestra and Royal Winnipeg Ballet. **All year:** 105 Vassilissis Olgas Avenue, 546 43 Thessaloniki Hellas (3031.867.860)

Flanders: More than 300 concerts and performances at cathedrals, castles, abbeys and baroque theatres in Antwerp, Bruges, Ghent, Mechelen and other towns. Mstislav Rostropovich conducts *Romeo and Juliet* in Brussels (September 10-October 26). Anne-Sophie Mutter plays Brahms's violin sonatas. **Until October:** *Flanders Festival, Kasteel Borteloo, Kleit Genstraat 46, B-9051 Sint-Denijs-Westrem* (32.9.2439449)

Monte Carlo: Springtime on the Riviera, when young soloists join celebrities such as Montserrat Caballé, Murray Perahia and Mstislav Rostropovich in a glittering programme of classical music, ballet, theatre and jazz. **Until May 5:** *Printemps des Arts, 8 rue Louis-Notari, MC-98000, Monaco* (377.92162299)

Schweizingen: Opera, ballet and classical concerts in the intimate settings of the rococo theatre and castle. *La Didone, Così fan tutte, Margaret Price, Concerto Köln and Schubert's bicentenary.* **April 26-June 1:** *Schweizinger Festspiele GmbH, Postfach 100040, D-70049 Stuttgart, Germany* (49.711.9293038)

Bergen: French music and theatre, young talents, new Norwegian music and early music. Recitals and chamber music concerts in the homes of Grieg, Ole Bull and Harald Saeverud. Outdoor theatre, literature, folk dancing and visual art. Performances by musician-in-residence Leif Ove Andsnes, Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan, Opéra-Comique from Paris — and Marianne Faithfull. **May 21-June 1:** *Bergen International Festival, Box 183, N-5001 Bergen* (47.553.1270)

Brescia-Bergamo: András Schiff, Gerhard Oppitz and Louis Lortie are among the pianists playing music by Brahms, Schubert and



The Salzburg festival in July once again pays homage to the operas and orchestral works of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, the enchanting city's most famous son

May 3-July 2: Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Teatro Comunale, Via Solferino 15, I-50123 Firenze, Italy (39.55.211158)

Holland: The festival celebrates its golden jubilee, and the music of Matthijs Vermeulen and Mauricio Kagel. Valery Gergiev, Gennadi Rozhdestvensky and Harmut Haenchen among the conductors.

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Anne-Sophie Mutter: sure to give her all at Prague Spring

Mendelssohn in two of Lombardy's ancient towns. **May 3-June 25: Festival Pianistico Internazionale di Brescia e Bergamo, c/o Teatro Grande, I-25121 Brescia, Italy** (39.30.2930220)

Dresden: The programme has as its theme *Italians in Dresden*. Operas by Puccini, Donizetti, Wagner and Mozart include *Roberto Devereux* and *Le nozze di Figaro*. Reinhard Goebel conducts *Musica Antiqua*: Köln in music by Albinoni, Lotti and Ristori and, in a solo recital, soprano Edita Moser performs *Dieleter* by Cherubini. Schubert and Strauss. **May 11-June 1: Dresden Musikfestspiele, Postfach 202723, D-01193 Dresden** (49.351.4866-307)

Florence: Maggio Musicale Wagner's *Parsifal* and Puccini's *Turandot* in the Teatro Comunale. Concerts by the Philadelphia Orchestra (conductor: Wolfgang Sawallisch) and the Orchestra e Coro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino (Giuseppe Sinopoli and Zubin Mehta among the guest conductors). Dancing in the Piazza della Signoria, and a retrospective of leading Chinese film director Zhang Yimou.

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Brescia-Bergamo: András Schiff, Gerhard Oppitz and Louis Lortie are among the pianists playing music by Brahms, Schubert and

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The TV channel with a difference - predictability

Well, I'm alright Jack. Thanks to a self-taught genius of an electrician called Idris, who paced round our Welsh fields with an electronic divining rod, we now have Channel 5 bright and clear in a region so remote that neither mobile radio, FM, nor mains water can penetrate it. The Channel 5 people had advised me that my nearest *safe* viewing point would be Birmingham or Cardiff.

For those who can't get it, I am sorry but not very. Channel 5 was never going to be anything but a patchwork of underused wavelengths, reachable by no more than 80 per cent of the population, maximum. There is no excuse for feeling hard done by if you are out of reach of its signal, unlike BBC services for which all (with television sets) have to pay whether they get them or not.

Those who are 5-less can join the chorus now chanting "Do we need a fifth channel?" But I hope they won't. Quite apart from the fact that I like what I have seen, the question belongs in the attic with "Do we need Channel 4?" "Do we need colour television?" and "Do we need talking pictures?"

We need Channel 5 because it is there, free, terrestrial and available to the vast majority who so far have elected not to invest in a satellite dish or a cable connection. Why should they not get maximum yield out of the equipment they already own?

But is it a real increase in choice? The moral disapproval that this question reeks demands a straight answer. Yes. Any increase in the quantity of national television channels from four to five is a qualitative gain. Another option is now available for the many nights when four channels offer nothing of interest.

Innovative? Creative? Oh, nanny *please!* Britain is better served than any country I know with challenging, imaginative, risk-taking, witty, artistic, television drama, documentary and discussion. BBC2 and Channel 4 are the kind of thing they call "National Treasures" in Japan.

Channel 5 does offer something utterly different: predictability, the same thing at the same time every night. This is a service for all those who like to collapse in front of the set without consulting a computer grid of information in advance. Sameness may turn out to be more subversive than it looks. The nightly chat show offered by the same presenter is an invitation to danger, and a new ingredient in the national mix somewhere to turn after *Newswatch*. Jack Docherty won my vote on opening night with a tasteless joke about a San Diego newspaper advertising 39 anoraks for sale.

If I had to describe Channel 5 in a single word, it would not be "American", but rather "regulated". It is a creature of the Independent Television Commission. It does what it

is told to do, which is to provide the same mandatory elements - news, current affairs, children's and religious programmes - as the other two commercial terrestrial channels. Like them, Channel 5 must also produce original programming. And it may not show on average more than seven minutes of commercial an hour.

This news, moreover, must be both national and international, and of high quality. The supplier is Independent Television News, the same organisation that feeds ITV and Channel 4 news. Just because Channel 5's presenter Kirsty Young sits on a desk rather than behind it, does not mean the news will be downmarket.

It was a low blow of Channel 5 to advertise its news - every night at 8.30 followed by a film - with the boast "We don't have the annoying habit of interrupting the plot for the news". How ITV would love to give up that annoying habit! It has begged to move

News at Ten for the obvious reason that by the time a film is resumed at 10.30, most viewers are heading for bed. But the political auctions are as bad as if the question were the adoption of year-round summer time. So Channel 5 is free to hit ITV in its soft underbelly - and then some. By casting the refreshingly monochrome-clad and unsmiling Young as presenter, it may have picked up a gravitas that was not expected.

Channel 5's frequent news updates could also hit the BBC where it will hurt - in the 24-hour digital news. You may have noticed that there is not much new news during the ordinary day. If a quick click to Channel 5 will give us the headlines on the hour we will have less incentive to invest in the digital gubbins to catch the BBC's version.

Whether Channel 5 will succeed, I have no idea. But I do know that it is a commercial venture, undertaken by those willing to throw more than £22 million into it on the chance that it will. If it fails they will lose their money. If the BBC's 24-hour news fails, we will all pay through the licence fee.

Channel 5's debut leaves two conspicuous gaps in British television. Its air is young, younger even than Channel 4's. Who will provide television for the oldies? ITV has the honour and doesn't much like it. The other gap is local television. Local evening news is one of the glories or "glories" of American television, which is centred on cities rather than national broadcasters.

One of the rejected proposals for Channel 5 would have based it on British city stations, joined in a loose federal structure. But the ITC chose not to go down that road. For local television, the only hope is cable. For that you have to pay. Channel 5, if you can receive it, is something for nothing.

Sex and sleaze among Tory MPs have dominated newspaper front pages for seven days and prompted accusations that the Labour Party, led by its campaign manager Peter Mandelson, is manipulating the news agenda to drown the Tory campaign.

It started last Thursday with *The Sun's* scoop about the Tory MP Piers Merchant and his fling with a Soho nightclub hostess and the simultaneous resignation of Tim Smith, the Tory MP for Beaconsfield. They hit the headlines after several days when the election had almost disappeared from the front pages. The two stories, followed by the weekend downfall of Sir Michael Hirst, chairman of the Scottish Tories, prompted six days of sex and sleaze headlines.

On the fifth day, the question for William Rees-Mogg in *The Times* was whether the Labour Party had dirty hands. The public had been sickened by the triviality and prurience in the "sleaze election", he argued. By inviting electors to concentrate only on secondary issues, it had made British democracy seem immature and it was Labour's fault.

Mr Mandelson, singled out by Rees-Mogg as the spin-doctoring mastermind of the campaign, responded yesterday by stating that although Labour supported those Conservatives who thought that Neil Hamilton should stand down at Tatton, Labour had had nothing to do with the sex and sleaze stories. Showing the felicitous touch that has earned him his reputation, he added that it was insulting to portray newspapers as "marionettes" in a media show promoted by Labour.

News editors have no wish to bore their readers, especially over an Easter weekend and before the campaign started in earnest yesterday. Yet on Saturday, Sunday, Monday, yesterday - and almost certainly this morning - sex and sleaze remained the front-page stories in the broadsheets and the Mail group. That was because Sir Michael's downfall, the refusal of Mr Merchant to stand down, and the changing signals from John Major were the best stories of the day. Only the *Express* has studi-

The seven deadly days



The next four weeks will demonstrate the effect of a week of sex and sleaze headlines on voting behaviour

ously avoided placing the sex and sleaze stories on its front page. *The Daily Telegraph* has led on the story but equally studiously avoided using - perhaps by editorial decree - the words "sex" and "sleaze" in headlines.

The frustration at the *Daily Mail*, which has been much less slavish in its coverage of the Conservative campaign than *The Sunday Times*, was demonstrated in its main headline yesterday: "Sleaze: Major Act At Last". Note that "At Last". A day earlier it had declared that many voters would regard Mr Major's angry silence unfairly, as an abdication of leadership.

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Against the Rees-Mogg interpretation, Robert Harris argued in *The Sunday Times* that sex and sleaze were the central issues in this election, even more so than the economy. As he watched local Tory parties defying Central Office and Mr Major's raging impotency about "junk" coverage, he was reminded of how tired

HOW NEWSPAPER READERS INTEND TO VOTE

Percentage of readers who say they are going to vote for the main parties								
Dailies	Sun	Mirror	Star	Mail	Express	Telegraph	Guardian	Times
Conservative	27	12	19	48	62	57	8	41
Labour	69	79	87	52	52	75	35	67
Lib Dem	8	7	11	13	12	11	14	18
Labour lead	52	67	45	14	20	30	69	3
Sundays	NoW	Mirror	People	NoS	Express	Times	Telegraph	Observer
Conservative	25	18	21	47	58	38	58	7
Labour	81	75	67	35	31	42	29	75
Lib Dem	8	7	10	13	10	14	18	12
Labour lead	36	56	46	12	26	3	14	82

Blair and its Piers Merchant scoop, *The Sun* has already scored two notable hits - and sparked a debate about the power of newspapers in persuading readers how to vote.

Our table measures the political allegiances of national newspaper readers so far this year (to March 7) and will be the benchmark against which that power - if it exists - can be measured during the campaign. It is based on 13,000 interviews by MORI and shows that only four of the 19 national newspapers, the daily and Sunday titles of the *Telegraph* and *Express* groups, have an overall majority of readers who say they will vote Tory - but by much smaller margins than in 1992.

The next four weeks will demonstrate the effect of a week of sex and sleaze headlines on voting behaviour. With its declaration for Tony Blair and its Piers Merchant scoop, *The Sun* has already scored two notable hits - and sparked a debate about the power of newspapers in persuading readers how to vote.

The weekly paper with the biggest percentage of Tory readers is *The Daily Telegraph*; on Sunday it is the *Express*. All four News International titles - *The Sun*, *The News of the World*, *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* - have an anti-Tory majority, as does the *Financial Times*. How will this change over the next four weeks?

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Art of getting away with it

SIMON BARNES



Midweek View

Cambridge! No, surely not, the umpire must have lost his head. Caym-brillidg! Caym-brillidg! He's gone off his chump, he is cheering for the Light Blues, what has happened to impartiality?

Well, that's what it sounded like. It was supposed to be a Dire Warning, but it sounded like partisan cheering. It sounded like that to the innocent bystanders, it must have been the most potent form of encouragement to the Cambridge crew, and it was certainly the most powerful depressant for Oxford.

The Boat Race umpire, Tom Cadoux-Hudson, was warning Kevin Whyman, the Cambridge cox, that he was trespassing into Oxford water. That he was encroaching, that he was putting Oxford off, that he was pushing his luck, that he was balanced on the tight-rope of disqualification.

Now, it is a common place of rowing that a racing eight comprises eight disparate individuals united only in their hatred of the cox. But surely even this, the most hallowed of rowing traditions, can be set aside, for Cambridge have their cox to thank for their victory.

The all-powerful combination of their bullying, luck-pushing cox and the cheering, impotent umpire was what did for Oxford. Rules in sport are there to be explored. It is a fact of sporting life, if not the one most regularly celebrated, that the strongest-willed and most ruthless competitors will always seek to explore the furthest reaches of sporting law. No, not to cheat. Merely to get the greatest possible legal advantage. Not to go for the safe ground, to have your sporting existence on the very cusp of legality.



Whyman, the Cambridge cox, is exultant after victory in the Boat Race while, in the background, a member of the Oxford crew looks forlorn

This makes logical sense. If a bouncer is legal and the batsman is dodgy, then there is no sense in pitching the ball up. Send him down the regulation two bouncers, and then add a third. Not a head-ball, that would be illegal. Give him one in the upper body, a ball on the cusp of legality. Make the umpire look concerned but helpless, make the batsman feel hard-done-by; make the fielding side feel that you are getting away with something.

The unholy glee of the stolen advantage surely washed through the Cambridge crewmen with every umpiring holler. It's not fair, sir! Look

retrial but diplomacy. The wagging finger, the lecture, and the very next time this happens you will be sent off, my lad. And the chief offender listens with apparent contrition, but he is glowing inside, and his team glows with him. Joy! We have got away with something, and the bloke that got stumped won't try that again, will he?

Cricket is full of warnings, but scarcely ever is action taken. Bowlers run down the pitch and bring joy to the hearts of spinners and their captain, and give to all the team the pleasure of getting away with something.

When rugby union forwars exchange blows, the referee's inclination is not

to send them off, but to give a strong line, says Whyman, er, look here, don't ever do that again, all right? I don't want to have to warn you again.

The official's Warning is one of the most ancient traditions of sport. It is supposed to make the offender think again. But all it does is confirm the offender's immaculate judgment to spell out, for the joy of his team, for the discomfiture of the opposition, that he is "existing comfortably on the cusp of legality".

When rugby union forwards exchange blows, the referee's inclination is not

even if this work of destruction brings little practical advantage, it still upsets the opposition. Someone has pulled a stroke on them, and that hurts.

In football, it is the custom for many players to start the game with a thundering tackle on the man they must mark, one designed to "let him know you are there". And referees tend to play along with that, offering instead of a first-minute booking as a Warning. Thus the defender is able to establish psychological ascendancy by (a) his physical assault and (b) the subtle pleasure of getting away with something.

For the pain of having a stroke pulled on you goes very deep. In a way you can accept being beaten fair and square. But to be niggled, bullied and manouevred out of it is a terrible blow, far more damaging for self-esteem. There is no one so utterly helpless as the person to whom it is revealed, for the thousandth time, that not only is life unfair, so also is

The unholy glee of the stolen advantage surely washed through Cambridge

Nothing causes so much dismay as the belief that your opponent is getting away with something: witness English cricket's hysterical reaction to the Pakistan ball-tampering allegations, or Australia's crazed campaign against a Sri Lanka bowler, Muralitharan, who, they believed, was a chucker. This sense of helpless grievance helps to pave the way for Australia's defeat by Sri Lanka in the World Cup final (Muralitharan 10-0-31-1).

These days, the officials take all the responsibility for the laws, the players virtually none. You may not care for this, but that is the way things are in modern professional sport. As a morality, it has at least the virtue of consistency.

But by adhering to the ancient code of Warning, officials hark back to the days when sport was played for fun.

These days, the Warning is a potent source of encouragement. It confirms that he is exactly where he wishes to be, serenely on the cusp of legality.

GOLF

Ryder Cup captain plagued by problems

FROM JOHN HOPKINS
GOLF CORRESPONDENT
IN NEW ORLEANS

WHEREVER he is, Severiano Ballesteros appears to be carrying the cares of the world on his shoulders. Whether it is the Canary Islands, as it was two weeks ago, or New Orleans, where he is competing in the Preempt McDermott Classic this week, Europe's captain in the Ryder Cup looks as cheerful as an undertaker.

Ballesteros is doleful about his troublesome back and his golf. "The trouble with my golf," he said with about as much levity as he can manage on a sensitive subject, "is that the ball doesn't go as quick as before into the hole. I don't feel comfortable with my swing." He is 30 over par for his ten competitive rounds in five tournaments this season.

Ballesteros has made one trip to Germany to consult the German doctor who helped Jose Maria Olazabal to recover from his foot problems and received several injections to reduce the pain in his lower back. So far, there has been no improvement and he plans more visits to Germany.

On the subject of the Ryder Cup and the announcement last week that the selection process for match this year will not be changed, Ballesteros was philosophical. "The case is now closed. I have to cope with it. There have been enough battles already with everybody. The Ryder Cup is not a war, it is a competition between two continents and that is the end of it."

If there was a topic of conversation that brought a hint of a smile, it was the form of Olazabal, who is also competing in New Orleans. Since returning from injury, Olazabal has played three tournaments, is 12 under par and finished twelfth, fourth and first. "Lately a lot of guys have been leaving the European tour, so to have Jose Maria back and doing well is good for everyone."

TELEVISION CHOICE

And for his next trick...

The Vanishing Man

ITV, 8.00pm
Anthony Horowitz is obviously a fan of H.G. Wells' *Crime Traveller*, currently on BBC1, draws on elements of *The Time Machine* while this latest Horowitz script makes more than a nod towards *The Invisible Man*. It is an unassuming piece of hokum which features Neil Morrissey as an air freight pilot who is sent to prison for smuggling. That he is innocent of the crime is bad enough. Worse follows when he is whisked off to become the guinea pig in a future scientific experiment. The upshot is that he becomes invisible, a chance for clever work by the special effects team. The trouble is that he can revert to normality without warning, usually when he is stark naked. Fans of *Men Behaving Badly* who have wanted to see more of Morrissey now have their chance, many times over.



Tom King as a conscript (BBC1, 9.30pm)

has composed a delightful commentary in Bejeman-esque blank verse. We open in Newcastle upon Tyne where Howard patrols the streets at night in his cleaning truck, observing the revellers, dodging the drunks and marking the girls out of ten. Jackie, by contrast, cleans big houses. She used to be a teacher but finds this less pressurising. The most ghoulish job on view is cleaning out empty tenement houses before the new tenants arrive. What John, John and Peter have found in these dwellings is probably best left to the programme. But the easily upset are hereby warned.

Army of Innocents

BBC1, 9.30pm
National Service was introduced in 1947 when the Cold War was at its height and Britain still had an Empire to defend. When it ended, 13 years later, two million young men had been drafted into the armed forces. To mark the 50th anniversary, former conscripts including Michael Aspel, Tom King, MP, and the late Willie Rushton, remember their days in uniform. Many of their experiences are richly funny, at least in retrospect. Those bellowing drill sergeants really existed and soldiers did whitewash coal. After basic training, many conscripts were given mindless jobs. But others saw action abroad and the film takes on a more sombre tone when it recalls campaigns in Korea, Kenya and Malaya in which hundreds of National Servicemen died.

Peter Waymark

RADIO CHOICE

Viewing Essential

Radio 4 (FM), 10.00am

The selling and buying of a house is, by general consent, one of an unholy trinity of horrors that can be visited on us. The others are divorce and incurable illness. Heavens knows: we have heard every conceivable variation on the themes of matrimony and mortality. *Viewing Essential*, narrated by Morad Devlin, is a trail-blazer—the first comprehensive investigation into the triple whammy that involves house vendors, house buyers—or, more often than not, non-buyers—and of course, estate agents. There is only one satisfied customer in today's episode. Danny has recently moved in to a one-bedroom flat, and all is well with his world. My heart went out to let-down Laura as she sobbed her heart out.

RADIO 1

7.00am Mark Radcliffe, includes 7.20 Newcastle 5.00 Dave Pearce 7.15 Whitley 2.00pm Nelly Campbell 4.00 Kevin Greening 5.15 Newcastle 5.30 Evening Session with Steve Lamucca 4.30 John Peel 10.30 May Anne Hobbs 1.00pm Claire Sturgess 4.00 Clive Warren

RADIO 2

6.00am Nick Barmby 7.30 Wake Up to Wogan 9.00 Ken Bruce 11.00 Jimmy Young 1.30pm Double Thrower 3.00 Ed Stivell 5.05 7.30 Trevor Brooking's Football Night. Scotland v Austria. Plus news of the rest of to night's football action. *Music Roundup* 9.00pm The Louie 2.00pm The Music of Japan (3/4) 9.00pm 10-Days 2.00pm Nigel Ogden 10.30 The Jamessons 12.00pm Charles 11.00pm Alex Lester

RADIO 5 LIVE

5.00am Morning Reports 6.00 The Breakfast Programme 9.00 The Magazine 12.00 Midday with Mark 2.00pm Puzzles on Five 4.00 John Inverdale Nationwide 7.00 News Extra with Valerie Singleton 7.30 Trevor Brooking's Football Night. Scotland v Austria. Plus news of the rest of to night's football action. *Music Roundup* 9.00pm The Louie 2.00pm The Music of Japan (3/4) 9.00pm 10-Days 2.00pm Nigel Ogden 10.30 The Jamessons 12.00pm Charles 11.00pm Alex Lester Up All Night with Richard Dally

TALK RADIO

5.00am Chris Ashley and Sandy Wray 7.00 Paul Ross 8.00 Scott Chisholm 12.00 Loraine Kelly 2.00pm Tommy Pearce 4.00 Peter Doherty 7.00 Moz Devlin's Sportszone 10.00 James Whate 1.00pm Ian Collins

WORLD SERVICE

All times in BST. News on the hour. 5.00am Europe Today 6.00 Europe Today 7.15 Chat (8/8) 7.30 Discovery 8.10 Words of Faith 8.15 Global Shake-Out 8.07 World Service 9.15 Andy Kershaw 8.45 Sports Roundup 10.30 One Planet 11.30 Sports International 12.45pm World Business Report 12.15 Britain Today 12.30 Composer of the Month 2.30 Outlook 4.20 Megastar 3.30 Sports Roundup 7.30 Global Shake-Out 4.15 World Today 4.30 Sports Roundup 4.45 British Today 5.30 All Out 6.00 Europe Today 7.00 Europe Today 8.00 Outlook 7.45 Outlook 7.25 Words of Faith 7.30 Multiclick 8.15 Britain Today 8.30 Multiclick 9.00am On Screen 10.30 World Today 10.45 Sports Roundup 11.10 Science View 11.15 County Style 11.30 Multiclick 12.30am *From Our Own Correspondent* 12.45 Britain Today 1.30 Outlook 1.45 Words of Faith 2.30 Assignment 3.15 Sports Roundup 3.30 Merlin Books 4.30 Europe Today

CLASSIC FM

4.00am Mark Grattis 7.00 Mike Read 10.00 Henry Kelly 1.00pm Luncheon Concerto. Serge Koussevitzky (Double Bass Concerto Op 3) 3.00 Nick Bally 7.00 Classic Newslight with John Brunning 7.30 Sonata Turin (Guitar Sonata Opus 81) 8.00 Evening Concert. Strauss (Horn Concerto No 2 in E flat); Rachmaninoff (Piano Concerto No 1 in F sharp minor); Sibelius (Symphony No 1 in E flat); Michael Mapes, includes Recorso 1.00am Luncheon Concerto (7)

VIRGIN FM

6.00am Russ 'n' Jon 10.00 Graham Dene 1.00pm Jeremy Clark 4.00 Nicky Home 7.00 Paul Coyle (FM) / Robin Banks (AM) 10.00 Mark Forster 2.00pm Randal Lee Ross

RADIO 3

5.00 Music Machine. Sarah Walker travels to the Isle of Skye to meet John MacLeod of MacLeod, 29th Chief of MacLeod at his home, Dunvegan Castle. They talk about the musical traditions there and particularly the pipes of the clan, the *MacLeod Tunes*.

5.15 In Tune, with Jeremy Nicholas. Includes *Curzon* (March of the Bowmen); Beethoven (Variations and Fugue on an Original Theme, Op 35); *Eroica*; *Tchaikovsky* (The Voweds)

7.30 Soundings the Century: *Taverner*. A new BBC studio recording of Peter Maxwell Davies's opera based on the life of the 16th-century English composer. With Mark Padmore, soprano; John Tomlinson, tenor; Pauline Weston, mezzo; John Tomlinson, bass; Oliver Knussen, conductor; London Symphony Orchestra; English National Opera Chorus; English National Opera Orchestra

9.45 *Music of the Masses*. Peter Maxwell Davies's *Mass* assesses the ritual nature of masses and Tony Goggo, a Benin priest, explains why masses need to be heard as well as seen in masking rites (24)

10.00 Voices. Ian Burtt presents a selection of songs with a setting theme (7)

10.45 *Night Waves*. At the Horniman Museum and Gardens, London. The 30th world, Material Culture: *The Object in Britain of the 19th and 20th Centuries*. Patrick Wright discusses the insight it offers into the artist's preoccupations and the values of contemporary society

11.30 Composers of the Week: *Mozart* (7)

12.30am Jazz Notes. Campbell Bumpo introduces a session from the Dave Lee Trio

1.00am Through the Night, with Donald MacLeod

RADIO 4

4.00 News 4.05 Kaleidoscope. Robin McAlley sees Colin Firth in *Fever Pitch*, the film version of Nick Hornby's best-selling book about his life-long obsession with Arsenal

4.45 Short Story: *Grandfather's List*, by Peter Crowther. Read by Tudor Owen

5.00 PM 5.50 Shipping Forecast 5.55 Weather

6.30 Coronation. Ned Sherrin hosts the final of the general knowledge music quiz. With Evelyn Glennie, winning the prizes (7)

7.00 News 7.05 The Archers

7.30 The Coronation. Another look behind the scenes of the West Yorkshire Coronation's office (26)

8.05 The Wardrobe. A look at the wedding dress through anecdotes, archive and music (9/6)

8.15 The Father's Pesach. Three generations of a Jewish family give their opinions on life before and after the National Health Service was created in 1948 (6/6) (7)

9.00 *Costing the Earth*. A look at the new packaging regulations to be introduced this month and their implications for manufacturers, consumers and the environment (2/8)

9.30 Kaleidoscope (7) 9.35 Weather

10.00 The World Tonight, with Isabel Hilton

10.45 Book at Bedtime: *Reading in the Dark*, by Seamus Deane. Read by Stephen Rea (8/8)

11.00 The Stargazers. The comedy series with Tim De Jong (2/6) (7)

11.30 *Music of the Year*. The comedy series featuring Doon Mackichan, Pam Ferris, Lesley Sharp, Phil Cornwell, Anne Reid and Alastair McGowan (7)

12.00 News 12.30pm The Late Book: *The Wasp Factory*, by Iain Banks (8/10)

12.45 Shipping Forecast 1.00 AM as World Service

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Playing the fool, but it's no laughing matter

The best April Fool jokes are those that take in millions of us. Yesterday, Esther Rantzen, never a woman to duck a challenge, harnessed the full might of afternoon television and managed to hoodwink... just one. Fair do's, Esther (BBC2) didn't make a bad job of it. The young man in question was, to borrow from his own fascinating vernacular, eventually "done up like a kipper, my dear". But quality should not detract from the lack of quantity. It was, still, just the one.

Which is more than could be said of Rantzen letting us "at home" in on the joke. How many of these conspiratorial pieces to camera has she done over the years? Hundreds, thousands, millions - who knows? Once again, I watched with a mixture of faint nausea and fainter fascination as she leant forward and confided that today's subject was practical jokes: "Everyone in the studio

knows that... except one young man who thinks it's about infidelity."

But it was the victim himself who turned a bog-standard April Fool into something special. His unshakeable self-confidence and rich use of language were all apparently genuine and very nearly allowed him to gain the upper hand. Nothing that Rantzen could say rattled him. You've broken hundreds of hearts, she taunted. He bridled theatrically and gave us our first earful of an accent that made Danny Baker sound like Professor Higgins: "I'm a true gentleman." Come on, chided Rantzen, you've had your "share of the birds" in your time - any idea how many? "One or two."

Nothing, however, could beat his response to the planned actress, who claimed that she had enjoyed a one-night stand with our man, as a result of which she had become pregnant and had a baby. There,

flashed Rantzen, what do you say to her now? Our hero gave it plenty. "How dare you come on this show, my dear, and accuse me of knocking you up?"

In the end they got him, thanks to some inside information about talons supplied by his soon-to-be-former best friend. But it had been a valiant effort. The rest of the programme passed as a reminder that people who list practical jokes as a hobby are best avoided, particularly if the fun-filled prankster in question is a funeral director. His firm, he chorused, had an old retainer who was in the habit of taking an afternoon nap in one of the coffins. Until the afternoon when "some of the lads" screwed the lid down.

More japes round at Albert Square and EastEnders (BBC1), where Nigel, having trawled the Internet for inspiration, came up

REVIEW

Matthew Bond



with the idea of super-gluing a £1 coin to the pavement. This confirmed what many of us think about the Internet but put a spoke in what I, at least, had been thinking recently about Nigel. Until then, Nigel (Paul Bradley), for so long cast as the Queen Vic's fool, had been making more sense with every episode. What was it he said to Lorraine on Easter Monday? "Never judge a man until you

have walked a mile in his shoes." Brilliant - even if it did come from a fortune cookie.

This, however, was a revert-to-type episode for our marathon man. "This is better than TV," he chuckled, as assorted extras tried to prise the pound from the pavement. Eventually, the regulars took pity on them and Nigel was presented with the coin, still glued to its slab, as part of his change at the Queen Vic. The one surprise was that with Grant firmly back in Desperate Dan mode, the paving stone hadn't had a bite taken out of it.

Best April fool of all, however, was Sarah, newly returned from the clutches of another good-looking Christian, arranging to have her father, Ted, arrested and charged with grievous bodily harm. I do note, however, that it was after midday when the arrest took place. So sorry, Sarah, I don't think it counts.

There was, I confess, the odd moment when I thought that Timewatch: The Forgotten Allies (BBC2) might be an April fool. That was partly because of the veterans, most of whom were interviewed in mahogany-lined libraries and recounted tales of extraordinary bravery in the Burma war in the laid-back, matter-of-fact military style that has been parodied mercilessly over the years. One cap recalled his own personal method of flushing out the Japanese. "I used to chuck a grenade or two in and say 'there you are, share that among you'."

But my doubts (in reality it's more about the programme's objectivity than its veracity) stemmed far more from the script. No matter how soothing Susannah York's narration was, there was no mistaking that everything was being presented in black and white rather than

the shades of grey that muddy most nationalist disputes around the world. Here the goodies were the Karen, a hill people who, unlike other indigenous Burmese, were loyal to the British before, during and after the Japanese occupation. The baddies were the Japanese, the Burmese collaborators, the Anti-Postwar Government and post-colonial Britain in general. As one aggrieved Karen put it: "Once the British left they forgot about us completely."

What we had here was very nearly a party political broadcast for the Karen National Union, which 50 years on is still seeking an independent state, a state which they say they were promised by the British. I have no grounds for believing the Karen are not fighting a just cause (no counter-arguments were advanced last night) but I would have liked to arrive at that conclusion without feeling quite so manipulated.

BBC1

6.00am Business Breakfast (73821)
7.00 BBC Breakfast News (7) (76289)
9.00 Broadcast News Extra (1) (8384395)
9.20 Style Challenge (306260)
9.45 Kirov (240208)
10.30 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (20579)
11.00 News (1) (4983043)
11.05 The Really Useful Show (9426734)
11.35 Change (7) (767208)
12.00 News (1) and weather (4650111)
12.05pm Call My Bluff (5028240)
12.35 Good Living (9031111)
1.00 News (1) and weather (6251111)
1.35 Regional News (5088314)
1.45 The Weather Show (3916182)
1.50 Neighbours (1) (22014598)
2.10 Quincy (704918)
3.00 As Time Goes By Penny goes into hospital for a routine operation (1) (3299)
3.30 Playdays (6415289) 3.55 Monster Cafe (9051821) 4.05 The New Yogi Bear Show (9333043) 4.10 Popeye and Son (8438111) 4.35 Out of Tune New drama about a small village choir (7760111)
5.00 Newround (7) (5411280) 5.10 Blue Peter (7) (5873901)
5.35 Neighbours (1) (352043)
6.00 News (1) and weather (53)
6.30 Newround, South East (1) (55)
7.00 How Do They Do? New series presented by Esther McVey and Emma Holmes. A man who taught a flock of geese to fly; how scientists unlocked the secrets of life on Mars; and the special effects that create a winter wonderland in less than two hours (5598)
7.30 Tomorrow's World. Phillip Forrester tries out an innovative self-cooling suit designed to allow firefighters to work safely in extreme temperatures. Plus: Howard Stadelman reports on technology which could help paralysed people by picking up their breathwires (7) (26)
8.00 The National Lottery Live. Carol Smillie introduces the millionaire-making draw (1) (841753)
8.15 25 Years of the Two Ronnies. Classic comedy clips from Messrs Barker and Corbett. Last in series (1) (538289)
8.55 Points of View. Anne Robinson presents a selection of viewers' comments on BBC programmes (1) (215240)
9.00 News (1) and weather (2847)
10.00 The Army of Innocents. Documentary about marking the 50th anniversary of National Service in Britain (2804)
11.00 Sportsnight. Desmond Lynam introduces highlights of tonight's World Cup qualifiers, including Scotland v Austria at Celtic Park, Ukraine v Northern Ireland, and Macedonia v the Republic of Ireland. Plus, Julian Wilson looks forward to Saturday's Mersey Grand National at Aintree (364178)
12.15 Sam A Town Like Alice (1958) with Virginia McKenna and Peter Finch. An English woman and an Australian PoW struggle to survive a Japanese death march. Directed by Jack Lee (923111)
2.10 Weather (3565154)

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BBC2

6.00 Open University: Miles of Ales (268021) 6.25 The Birth of Calculus (260956) 6.50 Flight Simulators and Robots (3772753) 7.15 See Hear Breakfast News (6484734) 7.30 Secret Life of Toys (2976866) 7.45 The Raccoons (4563444) 8.10 Wacky Races (346818) 8.35 The Lowdown (3572020) 9.05 Activ (8) 1024109) 9.35 Sweet Valley High (7) (7498298) 9.55 Funnybones (1) (2552192) 10.00 10 Telebutes (1760276) 10.35 Baber (1) (3026531) 11.00 The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles (41289) 12.30 Working Lunch (26043) 1.00 Secret Life of Toys (1350248)
1.15 Passage to Marseilles (1944, b/w) with Humphrey Bogart, Peter Lorne and Claude Rains. A journalist investigating a French Air Force squadron based in Britain discovers that their leader has escaped from Devil's Island. Directed by Michael Curtiz (26347647)
3.00 News (1) and weather (7542026) 3.05 The Natural World. Marine predators (3184043) 3.55 News (1) and weather (6056192) 4.00 Blockbusters (6022699)
5.10 Look and Cook (1893579)
5.40 News (1) and weather (95821)
6.00 Home and Away (1) (7) (346918)
6.25 HTV Weather (255227)
6.30 HTV News (1) (73)
6.00 Star Trek: The Next Generation (1) (302956)
6.45 Tres and Simon's Transmission Impossible (7) (7673635)
7.00 Seven Wonders of the World. Thomas Eisner, Professor of Biology at Cornell University, describes his personal wonders of the world (7) (9840)
7.30 Black Britain. Profile of Paula Fenton, a lupus sufferer (1) (31)
8.00 University Challenge. Charing Cross and Westminster Medical School v King's College School of Medicine and Dentistry (1) (3260)
8.30 Changing Rooms. Last in the interior design challenge series (1) (435)
8.30 Cleaner Flo Kragh (9.00pm)

8.00 Modern Times: Dirty Work. The work of professional cleaners (1) (203937)
9.50 A Woman Called Smith. Story of a Bristol mother who, upon discovering her son's heroin addiction, set up a local anti-drugs organisation (1) (152529)
10.00 News (1) and weather (7542026)
10.30 Newswight with Jeremy Paxman (1) (76622)
11.30 The Kingdom: Thy Kingdom Come in Danish with English subtitles (81713)
12.30 Learning Zone: Open University. The Art of Breathing (96009) 1.30 Food: Whose Choice is it Anyway? (35085) 2.00 Language Season (3970) 4.00 BBC Focus: English Heritage (545245) 4.30 Unicef in the Classroom (7574) 5.00 Basic Skills: What's the Problem? (53406) 5.30 Voluntary Matters (13203)
12.15 Sam A Town Like Alice (1958) with Virginia McKenna and Peter Finch. An English woman and an Australian PoW struggle to survive a Japanese death march. Directed by Jack Lee (923111)
2.10 Weather (3565154)

HTV

6.00am GMTV (691956)
9.25 Chain Letters (1) (3820573)
9.45 Regional News (1) (2942666)
10.00 The Time, The Place (50395)
10.30 This Morning (1) (6130222)
12.20pm Regional News (1) (4652365)
12.30 News (1) and weather (9036208)
12.55 Shortland Street (1) (9044227)
1.25 Home and Away (1) (5406802)
1.50 Afternoon Live (60636032)
2.20 Vanessa (1) (74216127)
2.50 Afternoon Live (6219569)
3.20 News (1) (7961598)
3.25 Regional News (1) (7960869)
3.30 Tots TV: Sausages (7) (61407579) 3.40 The Blobs (9058734) 3.50 Sooty and Co (1) 4.10 Animaniacs (1) (9316378) 4.20 Phiney and the Brain (1) (5540208) 4.40 Cone Zone (1) (8575550)
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8.30 Cleaner Flo Kragh (9.00pm)

8.00 The Vanishing Man. An uneasy comedy about an experiment - which works - to make people invisible. With Neil Morrissey and Barbara Flynn. Followed by National Lottery Result (1395)
10.00 News (1) and weather (30856)
10.30 Regional News (1) (717753)
10.40 Gremlins: It's the New Batch (1990) starring Zach Galligan, Phoebe Cates and John Glover. Saucier sequel to the 1984 hit. Look for a string of cameos and movie nippies. Directed by Joe Dante (1) (1622208)
12.35 Dating the Enemy. Patricia Mitchell presents the series in which a segregated studio audience of men and women get the chance to say what they really think about the opposite sex (5267241)
1.10 Keys to the Kingdom (1990) with Dick Van Dyke, Daphne Ashbrook and Kate Vernon. A newspaper published becomes the target of an old man who will stop at nothing to bring him down (990868)
3.15 Not Fade Away (1) (744777)
4.15 Sound Bites (5892512)
4.30 The Time, the Place (1) (44488)
5.00 Coronation Street (1) (40932)
5.30 News (40357)

10.00 The Professionals (5108307) 8.00 The Vanishing Man. An uneasy comedy about an experiment - which works - to make people invisible. With Neil Morrissey and Barbara Flynn. Followed by National Lottery Result (1395)
10.30 Coronation Street (1) (40932) 11.00 The Time, the Place (1) (44488)
11.30 Home and Away (1) (7) (346918)
12.30 Working Lunch (1) (5406802)
1.00 News (1) and weather (95821)
1.20 Coronation Street (1) (40932)
1.30 Home and Away (1) (7) (346918)
1.45 Afternoon Live (1) (5406802)
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5.30 News (1) and weather (95821)

CENTRAL

As HTV West except:
12.55pm-1.25 A Country Practice (904227)
5.10-5.40 Shortland Street (1893579)
5.25-5.50 Central Street (26802)
12.35pm Dating the Enemy (758864)
1.35 Funky Bunker (840406)
2.40 The Chart Show (418177)
3.35 Comedy Central (2036086)
4.30 Central Joffinder '97 (9467154)
5.20 Asian Eye (2749319)

As HTV West except:
12.20pm-12.30 Illuminations (4653695)
12.55-1.00 Emmerdale (5039192)
5.10-5.40 Home and Away (1893579)
6.00-7.00 Westcountry Live (34260)

As HTV West except:
12.55-1.25 A Country Practice (904227)
5.10-5.40 Shortland Street (1893579)
6.00-7.00 Meridian Tonight (21)
6.30-7.00 Doing It Up (73)
5.00am Freescreen (40932)

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SQUASH 43

Walker plays by the book at British Open

SPORT

WEDNESDAY APRIL 2 1997

SIMON BARNES 46

Why sport's artful dodgers push their luck to the limit

Injuries force selectors to pick and hope

By DAVID HANDS

RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

THE first British Isles and Ireland rugby union party to visit South Africa for 17 years will be named today and it is a melancholy fact that, such is the paucity of talent in certain positions, several players who have neither form nor fitness on their side are likely to be chosen.

One of those positions, wing threequarter, was further complicated yesterday by reports that Ieuan Evans had withdrawn from contention. But Evans, the former Wales captain and one of three players considered to have the necessary qualities to lead the Lions, denied suggestions that he would not tour if Martin Johnson was preferred as captain.

The Llanelli wing, 33 and a veteran of the 1989 and 1993 Lions tours, decided earlier in the year that he would bid for a place to South Africa and he assured the four home unions committee last night that his availability was

unchanged. That will have been a particular relief before the committee confirmed the choice of the selectors, since so few quality finishers are available.

Indeed, Evans would be my choice as captain, given the respect in which he is held, his ability to hold down an international place and the positive image he presents to the world at large. However, the likelihood is that Johnson, a contender to captain England this season, will follow in the steps of other locks who have led the Lions to South Africa — Robin Thompson (1955), Bill Beaumont (1974) and Bill Beaumont (1980).

The first Lions party of the professional era, 35 strong, will have been examined more exhaustively than its predecessors. Notational analysis has been done on all contenders so that selection is based not only on the evidence of watching eyes but also the era's unforgiving glare, which can reveal elements of play that might otherwise remain concealed.

Peter Clohessy, now playing his rugby for Queensland, is likely to

However, unforgiving glares are not confined to the camera. The team management of Fran Cotton, Ian McGeechan and Jim Telfer are rich in experience and between them can claim seven Lions tours as players and four as coaches. It is hard to believe that any trio could offer greater knowledge of the peculiar demands such a tour creates, or be more aware of playing trends in the global game.

For all that, the party will include more than its fair share of hit-and-hopes, a situation imposed largely by injury. What to do, for example, with Keith Wood, Neil Jenkins, Simon Geoghegan, Colin Charvis, Gwyn Jones, Christian Loader and Bryan Redpath? All are, or have been, injured at significant stages this season, yet the chances are that Wood, the Ireland hooker and erstwhile captain, Geoghegan, the Ireland wing, and Jenkins, the leading British points-scorer from Pontypridd, will all be chosen.

Peter Clohessy, now playing his rugby for Queensland, is likely to

DAVID HANDS'S SELECTION	
BACKS	
FULL BACK: T Sheppard (England), N Bres (England)	
WING: Ieuan Evans (England), I Evans (Wales), T Underwood (England)	
CENTRE: A Saramon (Wales), S Gibbs (Wales), W Greenwood (England), J Guscott (England), G Townsend (Scotland)	
STAND-OFF HALVES: M Catt (England), P Grayson (England), N Jenkins (Wales)	
SCRUM HALVES: K Bracken (England), A Healey (England), R Howley (Wales)	
FORWARDS	
PROPS: J Leonard (England), G Rowntree (England), T Smith (Scotland), P Wallace (Ireland), D Young (Wales)	
HOOKERS: P Greening (England), M Regan (England), R Nedale (Ireland)	
LOCKERS: J Davidson (Ireland), M Johnson (England), S Shaw (England), G Wels (Scotland)	
BACK ROW: N Back (England), L Delaporte (England), R Hill (England), E Miller (Ireland), S Quinnell (Wales), T Rodger (England), R Wainwright (Scotland)	

be called upon at tight-head prop and a late runner has emerged in Barrie Williams, the Neath hooker. All these players, however, offer hostages to fortune, either because they are prone to injury, or for disciplinary reasons, or simply because their experience is so limited that there can be no certainty about their ability to perform in South Africa.

The dynamic Wood, for example,

has not played since dislocating a shoulder against France in January. He has a history of shoulder problems exacerbated by his kamikaze approach in the loose, should he start the tour, it is pertinent to wonder whether he will finish it.

Phil Greening, the England reserve, offers similar qualities, but measured more sensibly: Williams is a good ball player whose time for Wales will surely come, while Ross Nedale, Wood's replacement, offers a solid dose of New Zealand reality and organisation.

That assumes his broken forearm will mend in time. Wales may prefer Jenkins at full back, yet his skills as pivot for Pontypridd are clear to see. If McGeechan could turn Rob Andrew into a world-class performer in Australia in 1989, then he can do as much for Jenkins in South Africa, and so obviate the need to consider Jonathan Davies, 34, for whom the bridge between the two rugby codes may just have come too late.

Leicester ring changes, page 43

Weary Taylor considers break from tour

By SIMON WILDE

MARK TAYLOR is considering standing down from the Australia cricket team, despite leading his country to victory in the Test series in South Africa and the second one-day international in Port Elizabeth on Monday.

Taylor has struggled with the bat throughout the six weeks of the tour and there are fears that he may be suffering from chronic fatigue syndrome. Taylor, who played a series of wild shots as he laboured for 44 balls to score 17 in Port Elizabeth, believes that a self-imposed exile may be the solution to his problems.

"The best thing I can do is have a rest from bat and ball and maybe try the golf club and the little white ball for a while," he said after his side's

seven-wicket win, which levelled the seven-match one-day series at 1-1. The third match is in Cape Town today.

There appears to be no suggestion, however, of Taylor missing any part of Australia's 16-week tour of England, which starts early next month and the team for which is due to be announced this weekend.

He has received private assurances that he will lead the team from the selectors and from Denis Rogers, the chairman of the Australian Cricket Board, who is in South Africa. "He is the best man for the job and has carried himself remarkably well as captain," Rogers said.

There had been speculation that Taylor might temporarily step down at the start of the one-day series, especially as he

was experiencing back pain that has required treatment in the past.

However, Ian Healy, the vice-captain, was suspended for two matches because of ill discipline during the third and final Test match at Centurion, thus forcing Taylor to carry on. Healy returns to the side today, opening the way for Taylor to take his overdue rest.

Taylor, 32, has been playing almost continually since October and has had little time away from the game since taking over as captain of Australia from Allan Border late in 1994. His poor form in Tests spans 11 matches dating back to December 1995, when he scored his most recent half-century, an innings of 96 against Sri Lanka in Perth.

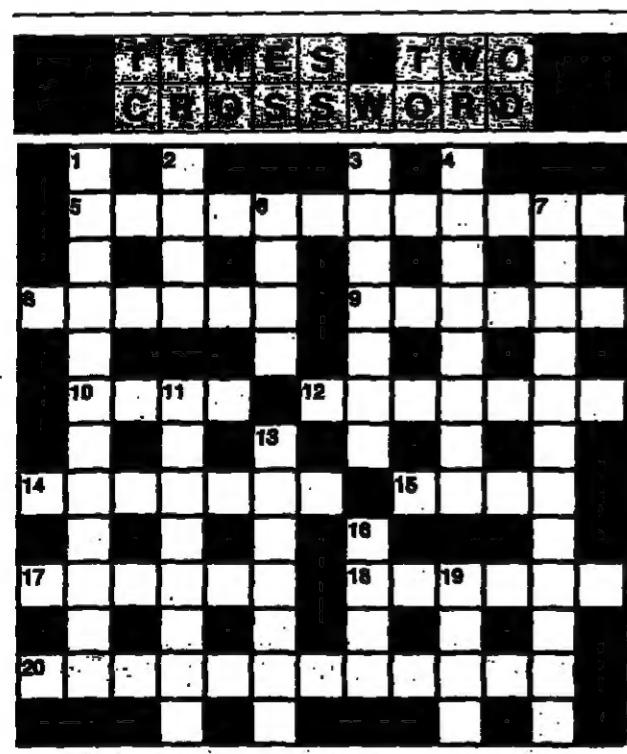
"I might have the next few games off and give Michael Di Venuto a go," Taylor said. "I thought about having the second game off ... it won't be easy as captain of the tour but I've sat out before. I don't believe I've lost it with the bat. To say I'm mentally tired is probably true. It certainly hasn't been through lack of trying."

Taylor is not the first cricketer to suffer from the exhausting effects of the modern international treadmill. Richie Richardson, the former West Indies captain, took a sabbatical after being unable to complete a second season in county cricket with Yorkshire in 1994, and during his four years as a Test captain rarely produced the batting form of which he was once capable.

Michael Atherton, who is expected to lead England against Taylor's side this summer, has mentally stood up extremely well to the immense demands of his job but he, too, has been plagued by back problems and, like Taylor, was keen that he — and his side — should take a rest from



Taylor is grim-faced as he leaves the field after being dismissed in the final Test against South Africa last month. Photograph: Mike Hutchings



No 1057

ACROSS
 5 Science of space flight (12)
 8 Smooth little stone (6)
 9 Niche; business suspension (6)
 10 Sole (4)
 12 Actually if unofficially (2,5)
 14 Arranged in lists (7)
 15 Blot, bay (4)
 17 Starvel (6)
 18 Type of hound, rug (6)
 20 A picture; plaster for it (anag.) (4-6)

SOLUTION TO NO 1056
ACROSS: 1 Sepulchral 7 Quicke 8 Noted 10 Also-ran
 11 Donor 12 Encode 15 Ignore 17 Ember 18 Radical 21 Locke
 22 Ovation 23 Persiflage
DOWN: 1 Svis 2 Poker 3 Lierre 4 Hangdog 5 Antonio
 6 Square meal 9 Doseging 13 Cubicle 14 Darkens 16 Cry off
 19 Drama 20 Childe

SOLUTION TO TIMES TWO CROSSWORD 1052
 In association with BRITISH MIDLAND
 ACROSS: 1 Spiked 5 Beret 8 Pawn 9 Grouping 10 Caustic
 11 Silly 13 Die the death 16 Sheaf 18 Messiah 21 Trombone
 22 Ahoy 23 Wesser 24 Typify
 DOWN: 2 Placard 3 Kings 4 Dogfight 5 Blot 6 Replica
 7 Final 12 Adherent 14 Enemas 15 Head off 17 Horde
 19 Swamp 20 Coax

1st PRIZE of a return ticket travelling economy class to anywhere on BRITISH MIDLANDS' domestic or international network is R Whitaker, Bradshaw, Bolton.
 2nd PRIZE of a return ticket to anywhere on BRITISH MIDLANDS' domestic network is G M Lambe, Bedeley Heath.
 All flights subject to availability.

Gould accused of racism by Blake after training dispute

By RUSSELL KEMPSON

NATHAN BLAKE, the black Bolton Wanderers striker, has accused Bobby Gould, the Wales manager, of making racist remarks to him. Matters reached a head last week after a training-ground incident and Blake refused to take his place on the substitutes' bench for the World Cup qualifying match against Belgium at the National Stadium.

Blake, 25, said yesterday that he would not play for Wales again while Gould was manager. "I have a total lack of respect for him," he said. "I went to see him before the game and told him that I did not want to be part of his team."

Gould vehemently denied the claims yesterday. "I am not a racist. I have nothing to hide," he said. Blake's grievance follows a series of alleged incidents, starting six years ago, when Blake played for Cardiff City. He claims that

Gould, who took a training session for Len Ashurst, then Cardiff manager, directed racist remarks to him. Matters reached a head last week after a training-ground incident and Blake refused to take his place on the substitutes' bench for the World Cup qualifying match against Belgium at the National Stadium.

Blake subsequently complained to Neville Southall, the Wales coach, who brought the matter to Gould's attention. "I called in Nathan straightforward and told him that if I had caused any offence, if I had said something out of place, then I would apologise. And I did," Gould said.

"If my remark was directed at Nathan personally, as an individual, then maybe he could substantiate what he is saying, but it wasn't. My main disappointment was that Nathan didn't come to see me first."

Last night the Football Association of Wales (FAW) promised a full inquiry. Brian Fear, the FAW president, said: "We intend to launch an investigation and talk to the team manager and to the player involved."

Scots prepare, page 44

Injury robs Britain of Rusedski

BRITAIN'S

hopes of reclaiming their place at the high table of world tennis receded yesterday. Already shorn of the services of Tim Henman for the Davis Cup tie against Zimbabwe this weekend, they were further weakened when it was confirmed that Greg Rusedski has not recovered from a wrist injury.

The winners of the European group one contest at Crystal Palace will advance into the world group, comprising the leading 16 nations, but without Henman, who has had an operation on his elbow, or Rusedski, in the opposition, Byron Black, Zimbabwe's world No 46, can look forward to his two singles encounters with some confidence.

David Lloyd, the Britain coach, is left with Andrew Richardson, Mark Petchey, Jamie Delgado and Neil Broad, who is a doubles specialist.

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